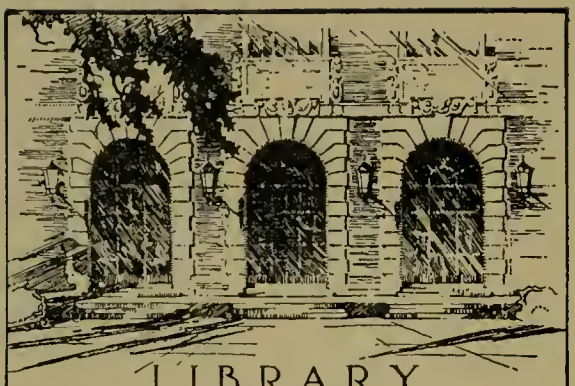

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UNCLE HORACE,

A NOVEL,

BY

THE AUTHOR OF

"SKETCHES OF IRISH CHARACTER,"

"THE BUCCANEER,"

&c. &c.

Contentment, Parent of Delight—
So much a stranger to our sight.

GREEN.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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UNCLE HORACE.

CHAPTER I.

A serving man not quite a clown.—GREEN.

THE old ugly clock upon the tower of St. James's had marked three — the hour of one of the sunniest days in the month of May. The trees of the Park seemed again proud of their greenness; for it had showered heavily at twelve; and the flowers, blossoming, poor things! with such affected gaiety in the balconies of the neighbouring dwellings,— had been renovated by the effects of a natural bath. Even Apsley-house smiled in the sunshine, while a couple of his Grace's high-bred domestics, as they lounged against the solid gates, appeared exceedingly amused at the awkward carriage, aspect, and habiliments of

a country-looking servant, who, with open mouth and staring eyes, had made his way down Piccadilly, and stood at Hyde Park Corner; now peering under one arch, and then under another, with as much astonishment as delight. He was a tall athletic man, whose age it would have been difficult to determine; his hair was combed quite straight, and was, naturally, of that pale drab colour which ancient coachmen of ancient families are still fond of imitating in their wigs. The cloth of his livery matched its hue; and his scarlet waistcoat was scarcely of deeper tint than his glowing cheeks. The town-bred lackeys would have set him down as a perfect simpleton, and perhaps have quizzed him accordingly, had it not been for a peculiar keenness and sharpness of eye that kept watch, as it were, over every person who passed, and every thing that occurred. He carried a well-filled carpet-bag in one hand, and a couple of hat-boxes in the other; a shot-belt was strapped across his shoulder, and a huge basket, out of which peeped a travelling-cap, and a furred glove

dangled from his arm; a brace of pistols were stuck in the belt, to which also was fastened a heavy iron dog-chain; to this was attached a stiff, white, crabbed-looking terrier, who seemed more bewildered than his master, yet ready to snap at every man, woman, or child that crossed his way.

It would have been no easy matter to determine to what class of servants the stranger belonged; his hat was bent before and behind, after the coachman fashion; his coat belonged to the genus footman; his gaiters were too clumsy for any but a groom; and his shoes! his shoes almost threw the self-instituted inspectors of his apparel into convulsions. Such shoes had never been made in London, that was certain! Notwithstanding the incongruity of his dress, Peter Pike was evidently on very good terms with himself, and with all the world. He laid his luggage for a few minutes on the pavement, wiped his face with a blue cotton handkerchief, patted the terrier, who, dog like, returned the caress with interest; asked a noble-looking Life Guards-

man the way to Belgrave Square, and resuming what a London servant would call a "very heavy load," crossed to Grosvenor Place, and left the lackeys at full liberty to scrutinize the next passer by who might be fortunate or unfortunate enough to attract their attention.

Peter met with little to excite his admiration after he passed St. George's Hospital; he thought there were a few streets in Liverpool as fine as Grosvenor Place, and, perfectly unconscious of any singularity of appearance, he very much wondered why such a number of people stared and laughed at him; he looked at his coat, it was new and spotless; his gaiters, they too were new; he cast his cunning eyes upwards, the brim of his hat was a good brim, and new also;—he felt, as he said afterwards, that he fitted as tight in his clothes as if he had been in his coffin. Yet still the people stopt, and stared, and smiled, and, to confess the truth, Peter felt relieved when he was fairly housed in the housekeeper's room of Mr. Brown Lorton's splendid dwelling in Belgrave Square.

There is no feeling in the world so chilling as that which comes with perfect "*newness*," if I dare so use the word—nothing that so oppresses a stranger on first entering a London house. Few are insensible to the delights of novelty in the abstract; but novelty, on the whole, is a very sad and wearisome thing, particularly so to one who, like Peter, had passed more than thirty years of his life in a provincial town.

He was exceedingly glad at first when the door closed and shut out the grinning faces of two nursery maids, whom he distinctly heard calling him "Johnny Raw." He breathed freely in the servants' hall, and thought he should have been happy in the housekeeper's room, to which apartment his *rank* (as valet to Mr. Brown Lorton's brother) entitled him; but the parrot of the lady's maid attacked his master's dog on the threshold, and almost tore his ear off. Bright could have managed a rat, a weazel, a stoat, or a cat, to admiration; but he had no knowledge of the mode of warfare adopted by parokeets, cockatoos, or any of the

tribe; and when the combat was ended, and poor Peter saw how grand and stately the room was, and how strange everything appeared, and how red and awkward he looked in the mirror, he wished himself back in Well-street, or in the great room at the Rose, where he had the satisfaction of hearing his master's health drank every Saturday evening, by at least one hundred and twenty happy and industrious persons employed in his said master's warehouses.

His mind was occupied between thinking what he should say to the housekeeper, and how he should commence a letter to a certain Mary Blundell; and, above all, who he should get to write the intended letter, when a tall, fashionably-dressed young man lounged into the room, and without taking any notice whatever of Peter Pike, commenced arranging his hair by a small glass which he drew from his pocket. At first Peter, in his simplicity, thought he was, what *he* should have called, a gentleman, and he half rose from his seat; but as quickly repented the movement, for he

thought, nay, he was certain in another moment, that the lounging *gentleman* was no other than a boy he had known some time previously. The warm-hearted countryman did not hesitate to recognise his old acquaintance, and extending his hand to him, exclaimed :—

"Eh, wounds, Job Harris, but I be glad to see ye. Don't ye know an old friend? I bean't an old friend with a new face: eh, marry me, boy! but ye'r wonderfully altered."

"Hah-hah!" replied the second-rate puppy, "I really did not recognise you; it is so very, very long since I have seen anything at all like you. Pray, I beg your paw-don, but pray, *what are you?*"

"What am I?" exclaimed Peter, "Why, I be Peter Pike, Mr. Brown's body-man." While the poor fellow replied, the "gentleman's gentleman" produced his snuff-box, which he presented to his astonished companion. Peter refused it in silent astonishment, and the beau, returning it to his waistcoat pocket, observed, "Oh, you don't fashionize ——!"

"What?" inquired Peter.

"You do not patronize the Royal mixture."

"I tell thee, in a word," exclaimed the countryman, really incensed at his affectation, "I tell thee honestly, I hate all mixtures; and the worst of them all, is a scruple of gentility to a pound of vulgarity. Why, what ails thee, Job? We be old acquaintances, and there is no reason in life why we should mystificate each other. London is a woundy bad place I know, and fashion's but a gypsy sort of mother, who changes her children in the nursing. So up and tell me what you've been doing for the last fifteen months, ever since you left Steel Lodge and the factory, and set off like a pack of harriers to the tune of Hunt the Hare! Ay, away you went, bag and baggage, as soon as ever Mrs. Brown——"

The puppy laid his hand on his arm emphatically, and said, in a manner which he intended should be impressive,

"I beg your pawdon, Mister Pike, but *we* only use the vulgarity you have mentioned in conjunction with a counteracting perfection—

Lorton. *We,* Mister Pike, are Browns Lortons."

Peter stood in silent wonder for a few moments, and slowly repeated, "Browns Lortons! Brown is as good a name as any in Liverpool; but Lorton—what the sense of the Lorton was, I never could tell—did Master get any money by it?"

"Money—vulgar—No, most excellent Peter, you are soporific, which signifies sleepy-headed: —the addition was a matter of necessity, I assure you: Brown—mark, how poor it sounds —a thing of one syllable, like Smith or Jones. What! was Brown, simple Brown, to come in contamination with Cavendish, and Pelham, and Langham, and Lauderdale, and Devonshire, and all the rest!" During this rhodomontade, the orator succeeded in winding himself up to his highest pitch of absurdity, for the edification of his country acquaintance; and to complete the effect, produced a patent fire-box, and having lighted a match fired his cigar.

Peter had to learn the tact of concealing

his feelings and astonishment, and therefore expostulated immediately with his associate on the impropriety of, as he expressed it, "Puff, puff, puffing, over such a beautiful room; can't you swallow the smoke," he continued; "and what delight can you find in an old piece of stick? Job Harris, you're an altered man, or you wouldn't show the cold shoulder to an old friend, as you have done to me."

"I beg your pawdon, my dear fellow," persisted the valet, "for not thinking of it; but will you take a cigar? They are real Havannah, I assure you."

Peter could control himself no longer; but luckily for him, Mrs. Claggit, who filled the combined situations of lady's maid and housekeeper, entered at the moment; to her he at once applied for information as to the health of her master and mistress; and, above all, expressing his earnest desire to know how Miss Mary was, and if she was much admired, and if she looked as handsome as the last day he saw her at his master's? Mrs. Claggit was both ready and willing to give Peter all the

information he could possibly require, for two reasons; first, because she loved gossip; secondly, Peter might be called handsome, and it answered her purpose to play him off against Job, who had, as she said, "been getting too airified for flesh and blood to bear." She told him that Miss Mary, as he called her, was as much worshipped as heart could desire; that she was more so this season than ever, because the family had got into a larger house, and Miss Lorton's fortune had increased (at this piece of news Peter smiled); that she had a great many lovers, but none who met with her approval; yet that a great deal of pains had been taken to improve Miss Lorton, and make her exactly what she ought to be, which was no easy matter, as she had odd country ways with her, that were hard to get over; that Mrs. Lorton herself was almost as much admired as her daughter; that she was greatly noticed by many ladies of high rank, because of her great propriety and splendid parties; that indeed she, Mrs. Claggit, thought she carried this (the propriety) a little, she might

say a great deal, too far; she ought to remember, that notwithstanding Mr. Brown Lorton's immense fortune, he was only a Liverpool merchant; and though there was work enough to prevent its being known, it *was* known, and talked of too; so that, considering *that*, she thought when certain ladies of high birth, who would have noticed Mrs. Lorton, and had a great affection for Miss Lorton, were civil, their civility should have been returned; but, indeed, her mistress chose to hear what it was no business of hers to hear; and to say that no one should visit *her*, whose reputation was not quite what it should be. To be sure, many commended her for it, and the Duchess of Fleeds, and Lady Conyers, and a many others, of the stand-offs, had been heard to say that Mrs. Brown Lorton was a prudent lady; and one of the very tip-tops, the holy of holies among the grandees, had called on them; but she (Mrs. Claggit) knew her own know; that people who have sons without a shilling, are very civil to people who have only daughters with chests upon chests of gold; no matter if

the blood of the sons is thick enough to be cut with a knife, still gold-dust could thicken even the thin blood of a Liverpool merchant! Mrs. Claggit talked so fast and so fine, that poor Peter could not exactly call to mind all she said, when she departed, promising to return as soon as she had "finished" her mistress. Job had also disappeared, leaving Peter, Bright, a parrot, and a macaw, in possession of the apartment, which, in honest Pike's opinion, was far too good for "sarvants."

Bright, curled up, as he was, under Peter's chair, kept a steady watch on the parrot, who clambered up and down its stand, inclined, and yet loath, to renew the combat; while Peter ruminated on his journey to London, wondering how it would end, and "putting this and that" together, to divine why, and to what purpose, his master, an old bachelor of fifty at the very least, could have volunteered such an excursion. There would have been nothing extraordinary in Mr. Horace Brown visiting his brother, Mr. Brown Lorton, but for the well known fact that the brothers had

parted on any terms but good terms—that Mrs. Brown Lorton and Mr. Horace Brown, had hated each other with more than the usual degree of hatred which brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law usually cherish the one towards the other—that Horace had a most particular antipathy to London, believing it to be the sink of iniquity—the modern Babel—the most abandoned metropolis in the whole world with the exception of Paris, which he abominated with the determined loathing of a veritable John Bull. You could not affront Horace Brown more than by endeavouring to convince him that the French did not live upon frogs and soup—that they were not slaves—and that they did not wear wooden shoes. His wine merchant once recommended him French wines, and lost his custom: — his haberdasher submitted French gloves to his inspection, and was turned out of the house: and Mary, his niece—the creature, some said the only creature, he loved upon earth — he sent one night supperless to bed, when she had been staying at his house, and was a very

little girl, because she played with a French doll! This last act of patriotic tyranny was the only one he regretted, and often did Mary say it was the single deed of unkindness in a long life of love.

There is neither history nor mystery connected with the fact of Brown Lorton's removal from Liverpool to London. He had realized a magnificent fortune; such a fortune as is often talked of, but seldom met with:—had married, early in life, a very lovely, a very weak, and a very ambitious woman—ambitious in a small way—ambitious of fashionable reputation—of the distinction which attends upon beauty and station, and "all that sort of thing." One—indeed the first disagreement the brothers ever had arose from the fact, that Brown Lorton never told his brother *who* he had married; and while Horace half suspected that she was a foreigner,—he soon discovered she had "foreign ways;"—they rarely associated together except for the purposes of business; and when Brown Lorton found himself master of at least a hundred thousand

pounds, he resolved to gratify his wife, please himself, and finish his daughter's education by a residence in London! Horace Brown would have sincerely rejoiced at the dissolution of a partnership which left him undisputed control over an immense establishment, had it not been that, by some means or other, his little playful niece had gained the mastery over his affections.

Brown Lorton had been the father of many children, but Mary was the only one who survived the years of childhood; and she had been so delicate during her infancy, that Horace Brown had invited her and her nurse to his cottage, the "Steel Lodge" of Peter's reminiscences, where she soon made her own way to her uncle's heart. This her mother had no objection to, having worldly wisdom enough to understand that if one hundred thousand pounds had one hundred thousand advantages—one hundred and fifty, perhaps two hundred thousand, possessed as many more.

Mary—nobody knew exactly why, or how

she managed it—controlled her uncle in all his "queer ways," and made him love her dearly, while tormenting him to death;—the truth is, she was proud of her power; and, moreover, uncle Horace did not love his niece a bit more than she loved him. This was the grand secret of her influence:—there was love in every tone of her sweet voice when she talked to him—love formed the basis of all her pet scoldings—love danced in her dark blue eyes when he praised her singing, and what but Mary's love could make him forget both gout and rheumatism! Much, therefore, did he rail against London, and London ways, and London fashions, and London habits; and (for as Mary grew up he fancied his sister-in-law less abominable, and his brother more tolerable,) often in the evening would he all but anathematize those who, dissatisfied with the station in which they were brought up, not content with living beloved and respected in their own sphere, seek a higher, where, despite their wealth, they are looked down upon as *Parvenus*, and are ultimately respected

neither by themselves nor others. The arguments of Horace were right and just, and would perhaps have been useful, had he delivered them with temper; but that was a good quality he never possessed, and his "crossness" was rendered more repulsive by a vein of biting, bitter satire, which pointed his sharp sayings, as poison does the arrow. Their meetings, therefore, were never meetings of affection; but Mary, sweet, gentle, lively, affectionate Mary, was uniformly the peace-maker.

As the period of the departure of the younger brother and his family drew near, these quarrels became all but combats. Often did Mrs. Brown Lorton declare that never should that "brute Horace" enter their house again: and as frequently did Horace swear that "the whole set might go headlong to the devil before he would trouble himself about them." Yet Mary, like the blessed dove, would bear the olive branch from one to the other, and patch up peace, which though sure to be dis turbed, was still, she said, better than nothing.

At last the day came—the travelling carriage and four was at the door—Mr. W. Brown—(he had not yet taken the name of Lorton)—Mr. W. Brown—Mrs. Brown—servants—imperials—and all ready. Horace and his brother had quarrelled tremendously the night before:—it would have signified little, for they had disagreed on the same subject scores of times—but they had parted with civil coldness. Oh, that chilling civility! What matters a keen encounter, where strength meets strength, and wit meets wit; or to descend—where abuse meets its equal antagonist; such quarrels can be forgotten—forgiven—ay, and heartily; but the sneer, the jibe, the curling lip, the lowering eye, the inuendo—these are Satan's barbs:—the others belong to poor human frailty.

All were ready for the journey to London—all save Mary. Where was Mary? Weeping on her uncle's neck, in her uncle's garden—weeping—kneeling to him only to come and shake hands with Mamma—to part friends with his own brother—for her sake: would he

refuse her last request, and she going away—perhaps for ever!

"For ever!" repeated the stern Horace: "Perhaps so best, Mary; perhaps it would be happier for me, if I were certain, child, I should never see you again. You would be better in the churchyard—I beg your mother's pardon—in the Vault—with the rest; better off a thousand times, than to become a corrupted piece of London affectation. What else can you be? I don't care for myself, though you and Peter, and that faithful dog, have long been the only creatures I hold communion with: but, oh Mary! you, who are so beloved, so respected, so looked up to throughout the country; whose reputation is like polished steel, whose heart—but no matter.—You to go, where the higher you get the more enemies you will make. The very wealth which your parents think will elevate you all, to what they call a level with the great—that wealth, Mary, will work your destruction; make you the mark for fools and fops to aim at; gather flies, human flies, who follow the honey to

steal it. You will become the victim of some beggar sprig of nobility, whose family will talk about their son being sacrificed to the Liverpool merchant's daughter!"

"No," said Mary, hiding her blushing cheek upon her uncle's shoulder; "No, uncle, dear uncle, I will marry only whom you please."

"Mary!" he exclaimed, "you are now seventeen, and I think old enough to make a promise. Will you promise me that you will never marry unless I approve your choice; it may seem——"

"Uncle, dear uncle," interrupted the girl, blushing still more deeply, "I make you that promise with all my heart and soul; here, on my bended knees—here, on this bank of violets, where I have played, since you led me by your finger from my nurse's arms;—here, with the air I breathed in my childhood, and have never yet burthened with a lie: with that blessed air around me, and the beams of God's pure and holy sun resting on my brow! I swear, uncle, I will never marry without your full consent and blessing."

"Enough, enough," he replied. "And Mary, you will not see me in London till that event is near at hand; threatening, I was going to say, and why should I not — for marriage, Mary, one day or other will be a threat to you—the evil of which I will avert. By God's blessing you will not see me in London, until marriage approach you—as a curse, not as a blessing."

Again poor Mary implored, entreated, prayed him to bid her parents adieu: she tried in vain. Time passed on, and Mary forgot neither her solemn engagement nor her uncle's promise. Yet she had never seen him since that day, until he made his appearance in Belgrave Square, an hour or two before the arrival of Peter Pike and Bright excited the rage of Mrs. Claggit's parrot.

CHAPTER II.

His last removal fixed him—every stain
Was blotted from his household coat, and he
Now show'd the world he was a gentleman,
And, what is better, could afford to be.

Life's Lottery.

MARY's career in society had been pretty much the same as that of every other young lady who has the prospect of a splendid fortune, and is under the guardianship of an easy, good-tempered father and a singularly affectionate mother. I repeat the word *singularly*, because Mrs. Lorton, fond of amusement, fond of pleasure, fond of admiration, as she really was, still loved her child with a devotion which formed the leading feature in her character; it was the delight of her life to hear Mary praised; and certainly her heart triumphed, and deserved to triumph, in the consciousness that Mary deserved all the praise—ay,

and ten times more than she received: that, gentle reader, is indeed saying much. She was the most beautiful illustration of simple poetry that was ever given to the world; a ballad set by Nature to one of her sweetest melodies: light-footed as a fairy; cheerful as the lark in June; the most removed from a fine lady of any creature in existence, and yet so naturally elegant, so unaffectedly graceful, that all who looked upon her faultless face blessed God for having sent into the world, in these degenerate days, so pure a copy of what Eve herself might have been when first she cheered the heart of Adam. Her mother had endeavoured to begem her with accomplishments, and her father had given out that his daughter might ride in a chariot of gold if she pleased; but Mary's accomplishments never *told* in society. She had no taste for crape flowers or rice-paper, though she could create a tree, and tint a landscape. Her voice was not sufficiently powerful to sing, so as to produce astonishment, and she sometimes failed in natural and

artless songs, because she felt them too intensely. She never could have existed in London, but for the flowers and birds that crowded her dressing-room. In society she laughed and talked with men, but her mirror-like mind only received the shadows as they passed, and preserved its bright surface uncontaminated. While her mother toiled most laboriously after presentations and introductions, and was kept in a perpetual state of nervous excitement by the *on dits* and disappointments to which admitted, or, rather, tolerated, *parvenus* are subjected, Mary enjoyed whatever came; and her mother loved her too tenderly to make her the partner of her fashionable anxieties. Once, indeed, she com plained bitterly of the insolence of a female autocrat, who had refused them the *entrée* to some temple where the *élite* only are privileged to be either extravagant or ridiculous. Mary grieved because her mother was mortified; expressing a hope, that a time would come when they should live amongst those who would consider and treat them as their

equals. Mr. Brown Lorton had his own share of ambition; he felt that something besides his gilded state was necessary to raise him to the rank of associates, or, I should rather say, visiters, who drank his wine, rode his horses, commanded in his house, and yet hardly noticed its master. He employed a person to hunt out his ancestors, or what does as well —to invent them; thus it was that Brown and Lorton became assimilated, and that the following paragraph, commencing with the 'Court Journal,' went the round of the papers:—

"We understand that Mr. Brown Lorton, who has recently purchased the estate of Lorton Hall in Berkshire, is a lineal descendant (by the mother's side) of Julia Mary, Baroness Lorton, whose beauty created such a sensation at the Court of Henry VIII. The descent runs thus:—Dame Julia Mary, created Baroness Lorton, married Edward Lorton, gent.; had issue, two daughters, who married; the elder, John Shofton, of Shofton in Essex fens; the younger, Henry de la Perr Alder, of Alder

Hill. Janet Alder married Alfred Prettyman, of the good city of Bristol, who by sign manual took the name of Alder, and left issue, eleven daughters and three sons. Ursula, the third female of this numerous family, was, according to some private memorials, distinguished for her truly patriotic attachment to Charles II.; and rather at an advanced period of life married Edward Crawford, of the city of London, an ancient gentleman, whose ancestors had added dignity to the civic chair for a number of years; they had issue, one daughter, who inherited immense wealth, married the Hon. Charles Lacelles, and left issue, two daughters; Margaret, the elder, who died unmarried; Mary, the younger, married Horace Brown, Esq., and died in 1804, leaving issue, Horace Brown, Esq., the elder, and William the younger, who has expended a small portion of his princely fortune in repurchasing the original estate of Lorton-hall, Berkshire, and has also shown his good taste by reviving the ancient name. Mr. Brown Lorton married Mary Anne, only daughter of Adolphe

Linden, Esq., and has issue, one daughter, Mary Adolphine, whose beauty and grace attracted her Majesty's especial notice at the last drawing-room. Mr. Brown Lorton's town-residence is in Belgrave-square."

So far went the mere newspapers: the 'Court Journal' enlarged thereon, as follows: "This information will at once destroy the influence of the ill-natured report, as to the plebeian origin of this distinguished gentleman, which has found its way amid certain underbred circles that delight in reducing the aristocracy to their own level."

"Death and the devil!" exclaimed Horace Brown, when he read this puff direct in the 'Court Journal,' which a waggish clerk in his counting-house had placed on his desk, so that he could not avoid seeing the obnoxious paragraph. "And to lug me into their notice,—how shall I ever be able to look my own clerks in the face! It is the first time, however, that I ever heard of Mrs. Brown's father; and to call the poor child Adolphine!" Bitterly did the unlucky wight repent his jest, for that day

Mr. Horace Brown made every human being who called him master feel his ill-temper. And moreover forbade, under pain of his displeasure, that a 'Court Journal' should be brought into his house; denouncing the unoffending paper as a record of folly and a compound of affectation! Mr. Horace determined to confine himself and his clerks to 'The Times.' "There," thought he, "fashionable trash is never recorded." Oh, Horace! Horace! where is it that fashion never enters? What was his dismay at seeing one morning the following announcement recorded in his favourite paper:—

"We understand that, in the event of a dissolution of Parliament, Mr. Brown Lorton, of Lorton Hall, Berks, and Belgrave-square, London, is resolved to offer himself as a candidate for the representation of either Berks or Lancashire."

Mr. Horace Brown electrified his clerks by throwing 'The Times' into the fire, and absented himself from his counting-house for two entire days; his faithful servant Peter

Pike, fathomed the cause of his master's increased irritation; and the morning after the destruction of "the leading journal," while laying the toast-rack on the table, ventured to say, "I think, Master, I know a way to prevent Master William from being in Parliament for us." Horace Brown's eye, inquired—how? though his lips moved not. "Just then," observed honest Peter, with a look of peculiar intelligence—"just then, if you'd stand for the county yourself." Whether Peter meant this as a jest, or whether he had grown ambitious of such a distinction for his master, I know not; but this I do know, that the observation nearly cost him his place.

Certainly there is no doubt that Mr. Brown Lorton meditated obtaining a seat in the British Senate;—doubtless, if he had been willing to come in on any terms, the party then in power, from a pure desire to augment their numbers for their country's good, would have procured him a seat; but those of whose acquaintance he was ambitious, were of the opposite set, and so he was obliged to wait

until the spirit of the times brought about that change which was as much coveted on the one side, as it was deprecated on the other; had matters been otherwise, there is little doubt that Mr. Brown Lorton's round ledger-hand would have franked many a letter, and his "still, small voice" have murmured the "yea, yea," or "nay, nay;" so delightful to those who glory in the game of "follow my leader."

Although Brown Lorton had meditated upon mixing with his fellowmen in the House of Commons, it was not as yet understood by the *élite* who "patronized" his wife, that he was at all times admissible into their circles. Mrs. Brown Lorton had planned and laboured for some months after Mary's presentation at Court, to be invited to a certain party, which stamped a mysterious sort of privilege on its guests. She had not interest enough to effect her desire, but she had what did as well—she had gold; a bargain was struck, through the interposition of a lady-agent, who did not scruple to accept a douceur for her trouble. The female part of the family were informed,

"that they might go, but that Mr. Brown Lorton could not be received."

The lady, though she loved her husband, was elated at her success, but Mary's indignation knew no bounds; in vain did her mother represent the advantages that must arise from such an introduction,—dear Mary was firm in her resolve. "What! accept such a notice as an invitation? What! consent to enter a house where her father was forbidden to appear,—submit to such a degradation? Never!" And her deep blue eyes grew brighter, and her cheek flushed, as she flew into her father's library, where, poor man, he sat half the day, playing grand amongst splendidly-bound books, which, to do him justice, he *did* read sometimes; there she threw her arms round his neck, and wept in the fullness of mingled ire and affection; she had the satisfaction of sending a refusal to the "permit"; and the very same night, in the crush-room at the Opera, was imprudent enough to cast a look of anger and defiance upon the proud woman whom she insisted

had insulted them: the look never reached its destination, but fell on an antiquated beau, who displayed his wit by declaring that Miss Lorton's eyes were as brilliant as *cut-steel;*— the termination of the affair was, that Mrs. Lorton lost her money. Refunding is not precisely understood by the sellers of introductions. But, despite her vexation, Mary rose in her mother's esteem; while her father, after dinner, with tears in his eyes (the mixed produce of feeling and claret), declared that Mary had proved she loved her parents for themselves, not for their gold. And the blessed girl laughed at the absurdity of supposing that parents could be loved for anything but themselves. She had not learned that people are always apt to believe they are valued by others for the quality, or possession to which they themselves attach the greatest merit; Mr. Brown Lorton had long imagined that his gold was his; perhaps he was right—we shall see. Not having accomplished his seat in Parliament, Mr. Brown Lorton, in a lucky moment, conceived he could attain the po-

pularity his soul desired, by giving dinners. He had discovered, for somebody had told him, that young men of fashion attended much more to the business, the *materiel* of eating, than they did formerly. Your regular diner-out of the last century, was a rubicund, solid, calculating person of forty, or thereabouts. No man under a certain calibre was then esteemed worthy of a seat at the table of a giver of dinners. But, in our more refined age, young men and thin, animals, who, if they *can* eat a dinner, never look the better for it,—creep even into the reserved places, and discuss prime cuts and green turtle—to say nothing of the variety of made dishes—with a precocity of skill that might well put the old gastronomic school to the blush. Most men of ton and taste were satisfied to boast the possession of a French cook; but our *ci-devant* Liverpool trader caused it to be made known that his house confessed a divided empire—he entertained both an Italian and a Frenchman to "rule his roast."—"Roast," did I say? Now, out upon my vulgarity!—who ever heard of such a term in modern cookery?

Brown Lorton's dinners had been really talked of, ay, and recorded too, amongst the fashionable novelties of the day; and he had, thanks to his cooks, attained the very summit of gastronomic reputation, when his brother Horace's unexpected arrival electrified his establishment;—all was mingled astonishment and dismay in his mansion. Horace had not been invited, and yet Horace was come. Horace, too, had been making money while other people were spending it; so that Horace, though to some an unwelcome visitor, must not be unwelcomed. Mary was, as usual, in her pretty dressing-room — not alone though. Mrs. Brown Lorton was too able a tactician not to have secured an ally in the person of a lady, half-governess, half-companion, who, well bred, *well educated* (as the phrase goes), and accustomed to the routine of fashionable life, could instruct without wearying, advise without annoying, her charge, and was at least ten years younger than herself. Miss Maxwell, though doomed to a situation half "toady," half teacher, had nevertheless her pleasing quali-

ties; but whatever disposition she had for good or evil, will be developed in the progress of my story. Hundreds of persons of her class pass harmlessly and happily through life, filling up the chinks of society to admiration, who are never either noticed or missed, and yet could not very well be done without. Mary's room was fitted up with greater taste than is generally displayed in a young lady's boudoir. The upholsterer had done less, the fair mistress *more,* than usual;—there was the common quantity of white muslin and pink silk; there were ottomans, and china and looking-glasses, and a guitar; the window opened into a deep balcony, completely screened from observation, and filled with flowers,—Mary was extravagant in her flowers. Over the low, white marble chimney-piece hung that exquisite print of the Trial of Lord William Russell—it is the picture, of all others, for a lady's chamber. What woman can think of the womanly devotion and heroism of Lady Rachel, without being better for the thought? There was a splendid engraving of Scott, another of Wordsworth; Newton's ever-living Vicar of Wake-

field; a few drawings, selected evidently more by feeling than judgment,—the *science* had not been cultivated in proportion to the selector's *love* of the beautiful art. In one corner, supported on a pedestal of black marble, and canopied by a drapery of black velvet, was an exquisite model of Canova's Melancholy Magdalen. It would be difficult to trace the origin of the taste which prompted Mary, the gay, light-hearted Mary, to select such a subject; but there it was: and often, when her bright blue eyes rested upon it, they filled with tears. She used playfully to call it her shrine, and wish that the world's votaries could be brought to kneel to anything so holy. It was pleasant to see how frequently that beautiful girl retired within her small sanctuary,—singing with her birds, employed with her embroidery, or reading books, which a moralist must approve, though a philosopher would sneer at—spent many an hour, which women, less admired, less sought after than the heiress of Lorton, would have squandered in idle chatter, or more reprehensible flirtation.

There was to be a splendid ball on the evening of Horace Brown's arrival in Belgrave Square, and Mary's maiden, a tall, graceful damsel, with large brown eyes and braided hair, had laid a very pretty white crape dress on the sofa in Mary's room, where Miss Maxwell had been assisting and directing, or trying to direct, Mary's taste in the arrangement of some jewels.

"Simplicity and pearls!" said the gouvernante; "your caskets might as well be restricted to a single suit; for it is pearls, pearls, nothing but pearls. Well, I wish I had been born a beauty and an heiress."

"Miss Maxwell," laughed Mary, laying down her embroidery, and inspecting her dress;—"say, an heiress; beauty follows riches, at least, so we observe, as surely as the shadow follows the substance. I never heard a word of my beauty until dear, kind Papa advertised my heiress-ship."

"Never, Mary?"

"No: never by anybody of consequence, which you say is the same thing as not hearing

of it at all. Miss Maxwell, I am so tired:—do you know what I should like?"

"No; but I know what I should like. I should like you to go down to the piano, and sing over that splendid aria which won Grisi so many hearts, at Lady Flasherton's morning concert."

"I, who cannot go through a ballad without blushing and trembling, to attempt one of Bellini's most difficult airs! My dear friend, will you not understand how very ridiculous my pet linnet would make herself by emulating Jubilee? No, no: the violet has not the rich perfume of the lily, nor the robin the note of the lark."

"My dear child," said her companion, "do not, I implore you, get that horrid *blue* trick which degrades Lady Ellen so much—drawing similes for ever; it may confer a sort of distinction on her, poor thing, but you——"

"That will do, Miss Maxwell. I wish I could resemble Lady Ellen in anything; yet she would not wish me to be an imitator."

"When I lived with Lady Flasherton,"

said Miss Maxwell, who had the habit, so natural to weak minds, of appealing to the opinion of another for the confirmation of her own — "When I lived with Lady Flasherton——"

"Never mind her, dear Maxy, now," interrupted Mary, who from past experience had an instinctive dread of lady this, lady that, and lady t'other, following in the train of Lady Flasherton. "Never mind her, but guess what it is I wish for."

"A differently situated box at the Opera! I assure you that the draught gave me quite a crick in my neck.—Your Mamma's box is so exposed——"

"Ah you must take care of rheumatism, as Doctor Priestly says, dear Maxy."

"I wish Doctor Priestly would mind his own business," said Miss Maxwell, bridling. "I am not *quite* old enough for rheumatism yet."

"Come, now, guess what is my heart's desire."

"Another Opera box?"

"No."

"An entire stomacher of emeralds, relieved with brilliants, fashioned into stars, and bordered with pearls, as large as blackbird's eggs?"

"No."

"A new batch of lovers?"

"No, no," replied Mary, gaily; "I must dispose of the old ones first. It is very uninteresting to have so many; so many with but one idea?"

"Well, but is it not pleasant to *be* that one idea?"

"Ah, you mistake," replied the young lady with an altered manner; "their *one* idea is self. Come, tell me, Miss Maxwell, how many I have. I am heavy at heart this morning; but they say I am a tyrant, and nothing enlivens a tyrant so much as numbering his captives."

"First tell me what you should so much like."

"Oh, it was nothing, simply nothing," she replied, carelessly.

"Then tell over your own lovers, Miss Lor-

ton, and arrange your own jewels. Why should I pleasure you, when you refuse to pleasure me. Lady Flasherton,—"

"If I did tell you," interrupted Mary, "you would not understand me: — you are town-bred."

"And does that dull the understanding?" inquired Miss Maxwell.

"Were Uncle Horace here," said Mary, "he would reply, that it perverted the thing you named; which, he would saucily add, no woman ever possessed."

"Oh, the monster!" exclaimed Miss Maxwell, who stood boldly forward as the champion of female intellect, thereby supporting the excellence of her own.

"Dear Uncle Horace," continued Mary, "so rough, yet so gentle; so harsh, yet so kind. A bear, with the heart of a lamb; the bravery of a lion, and the wisdom of an——."

"Owl!" rather rudely interrupted the directress *en chef* of the heiress's manners.

"I beg your pardon," replied Mary, colouring; "Uncle Horace is not in the least an

owl. He is tall, severe, yet noble looking. They used to say I was very like him—as like as a child could be to a man."

"My dear Mary, you must not look offended; I did but jest. Now, what was it you wished for?"

"I will tell you now," said the maiden, leaning her arm on a chiffonière, and standing with her back to the curtained door, "I will tell you now—for the mention of my dear Uncle's name always brings a torrent of pure thoughts and pure feelings back to my heart —I wished—it was very silly—it *is* very silly —and yet I have been wishing it all the morning—I wished that—I—wished—for a free, unfettered race over the green downs, where I sported when a child. Oh! you know not what it is! The stainless sky of heaven for your canopy—the soft and speckled moss yielding beneath your tread—the dew, breaking into moist diamonds round your feet—the leveret! her long ears peeping 'mid the golden furze, as if astonished at your swiftness; and then, among the bushes to discover the song-

thrush's nest, the little golden bills of the nestlings gaping for food, while their parents circle o'er their heads, and, in Nature's own true language, implore you not to harm their callow brood. My own beloved downs! what would I not give for a branch of white roses from my dear nurse's cottage!"

"The most beautiful roses I ever saw," said Miss Maxwell, without understanding or heeding the natural enthusiasm of Mary's character,—"The most beautiful roses I ever saw, were in a vase at Howell and James's, yesterday."

"Howell and James's!" repeated the girl, in a tone which said, 'you have brought me from heaven down to earth.' "Howell and James's, indeed! Well, I have done. There is nothing of Nature here, so why should I speak of what is not;—but had you seen the place I called mine own—my uncle's cottage, three miles from the busy town—so far from business—just for the sake of the pure air and freshened breezes, you would comprehend this rhapsody."

Poor Miss Maxwell repeated one of the thousand small lies of society, and said, "I do," when she did not; but she could devise no other mode of recalling Miss Lorton to herself, than by inquiring, if now she should tell over her lovers!

"Ay, my lovers," sighed Mary. "Well!—"

"That 'Well,' sounds like *Ill!*—but never mind. What say you to the Scotch highlander?"

"I say," replied Mary, trying to dispel her romantic visions, "away with kailbrose and haggis; his face and his pedigree are all too long for Mary Lorton."

"Lady Flasherton says that the young Irish peer——"

"Stop, stop, my dear Maxy. The Irish peer with the long-tailed family—scores of distant cousins—dozens of near relations—ever so many fathers and mothers—O's and bogs—feasts and fasts—saints and sinners—pride and poverty! No: those who like him may have him; but I will never be led to the altar by a compound of shillalas, shamrocks, and whiskey!"

"What if your mother said Yes?" inquired Miss Maxwell, with whom the handsome, thoughtless Irishman was a great favourite,

"That will neither my father nor my mother," replied Mary. "Don't you remember the song——"

"'But my mother having heard that the young man was poor,'—

"you know what follows."

"That objection cannot be made to Sir Paul—the City Sir Paul! Perhaps he may find favour in your sight."

"Human nature," as some wise writer gravely remarks, "is only human nature!" And it is not in the beforesaid, ill-used human nature, at least not in the human nature of a young girl, to count over her lovers, numerous as the sands of the sea, without being amused at their quantity or quality. Mary was both too high-minded and too timid to enter into the unprincipled vulgarity called flirting; but she had acquired, perhaps from her uncle Horace, a habit of observation, and a perception of the

ridiculous, which was the source of much innate amusement to herself. This she rarely imparted to others; but the mention of the City Sir Paul, the great feeder at her father's table, was too powerful a temptation, and she laughed outright while sketching his portrait. "What! the modern Falstaff—the knight of the beetle brow and enormous rotundity, whose eyes wander unceasingly over the crowded board, seeking what next may be devoured: who, when a boy, wished that the school-room was a plum-pudding, and that he might be permitted to eat his way out of it. The lord of venison—the very king of turtle—the emperor of high feeding! Heard I ever the like, to mention him to me!"

"What think you of the half French, half Italian Count de Mouskito?" inquired Miss Maxwell. "His last importation of gold chains, poodles, and perfumes, appear to have made a great impression on your mother's susceptibility and your father's wisdom."

Mary's eye rested on Miss Maxwell, to ascertain if she intended her last sentence as a

sneer, or a simple observation. Her features were calm and quiet; in fact, as meaningless as usual; and she was employed in snipping two ends of ribbon to exactly the same length. At last she raised her eyes, which were of an undefinable colour, verging on gray, to the expressive and inquiring countenance of her charge, and quietly repeated, "What think you of Mouskito?"

"She dared not have said it to me, if she had intended it as a sneer," thought Mary, and replied, "I think Robin Hood's far-famed bow was as nothing to the one he draws. If you had only heard his address to me the other day. 'Ma chere demoiselle, I assure you I have de courage of de lion, wid de gentleness of de agneau—what you call lamb! and de wisdom of ten tousand serpents. Ah! mademoiselle, if you did but see me once enragé, you would never forget it! At Rome, in that great and mighty city, de Pope himself call me rascally Frenchman. I take him by de nape of his neck, as if he was little dog—what you call poppy—and kick him (je vous

demande mille pardons, chere mademoiselle)—from his own palace to St. Peter's, where he was going to celebrate son religion; and den I say to de assemblée—Ah, ah! behold your Pope! And dey say—no von ting, no von vord; they were effrayé de moi—who am, chere mademoiselle, your homble slave."

"Upon my word, most gentle Mary," said Miss Maxwell, "you did that admirably. Ah! my dear, if you would only let yourself out in society, what a sensation it would create; it would be exactly like—like—— "

"You are at a loss for a simile, so I will help you," interrupted Mary—"like that cruel mockery of mirth, dancing in fetters. Oh! there has been a great deal of pains thrown away on me! I shall never become what you call 'A well-educated young lady.'"

"If you will none of these I have mentioned," said Miss Maxwell, hunting the subject to death, "you have, I am sure, less inclination for the *attachés* and younger brothers, who dress a room, and pay attention to the chaperons."

"In truth, I care for none of them, and you know it. I do not want to marry."

"Every young lady says so *before* she is twenty."

"Psha!" replied the young heiress. "And yet, do you know, there is one reason why I should like to marry nobly. There are certain persons, and I could name them, who have slighted the daughter of the Liverpool merchant, because of her birth, and flattered her because of her wealth. All I say now is, let them look to it if ever I should be a Countess! — I'll show them that the blood of a trader is as red as the blood of a duke. My Opera box shall be lined with ermine, and carpeted with miniver. I'll cloak me in the richest furs, ay, furs that kings might covet."

"You would do well and wisely," said Miss Maxwell, filling up the break which Mary herself had left. "I am glad to see a spirit in you at last; something more dignified, more fearless."

"You said I would do wisely," interrupted Mary, pursuing the current of her

own feelings; "you did wisdom injustice; if the thought were born of wisdom, it would not have made my heart heavy, or my cheek flush. Oh, no, Maxy, it would not be wise; I should sacrifice my own happiness for a wicked bauble, and be rewarded by knowing that every woman of illustrious birth whom I outshone would call me—"

"What?"

"The proud Parvenue!"

Miss Maxwell remained silent, and Mary drew a miniature from her bosom, which she kissed affectionately. "See," she exclaimed, "see! it is dear uncle Horace! Whenever I am going to have a fit of folly, I look upon his picture,—I would not be without this little jewel for the wealth of worlds! When my mother gained her object, and persuaded my father to come to London, the business was divided between papa and uncle Horace; and owing to my uncle's cleverness, papa found himself richer by thirty thousand pounds than he had dreamed of;—and uncle need not have told him this; but oh, he is so upright, and so

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good! I can understand the nature of a talisman when I look upon my little picture,—How I do wish he were here! but I see no prospect of his visiting London."

"Well, Mary," said Miss Maxwell, looking over her shoulder at the picture; "well, Mary, I think I never saw a more perfect portraiture of a cross, formal, cold, pigtailed old bachelor."

Mary turned slowly round to reprove the speaker for her observation, but ere she could utter a word, she found herself in the arms of —uncle Horace.

CHAPTER III.

> And folks are always apt to sneer—
> One would not be out-done, my dear!
>
> LLOYD.

IT is not to be supposed that all went smoothly as a marriage bell with Peter and his new associates. Peter, as well as his master, had a distinctive character; he had lived, "man and boy," twenty years in the service of Horace Brown, and had acquired a few of his habits. Bright, too, was in his manners very distinct from the sleek and silky spaniels,—*petits maîtres,* in their way,—who crept, and crouched, and snarled about the house; and, indeed, master, man, and dog, were at once regarded with suspicion throughout the establishment. Job Harris intimated to Peter, before he had been an hour in the house, that Bright should be sent to the stables—a proposal which Peter resented as warmly, as if Job had directed him to be consigned to the

same domicile. Peter's astonishment was continually excited; the servants were so different to any he had ever before seen;—Mrs. Claggitt was the only person who treated him with common civility; and even her civility had something dubious in its character. One little scene which Peter witnessed astounded him so much, that he treasured it in his memory, to be repeated in the country; and as it was the first, and, indeed, the last of the kind he experienced, it was well worth remembering. Certain expressions and observations soon proved to Mrs. Brown Lorton's fashionable servants, that Peter Pike was neither a rogue nor a fool; consequently he was not exactly suited for their acquaintance; and though they were obliged to tolerate him, they never suffered his presence, after the first day, behind the scenes. The best servants in the world are to be found in the establishments of the genuine aristocracy of England —men and women who have grown grey in faithfulness and affection for their employers. The evils which the *mediocre* class of so-

ciety complain of in their domestics, can generally be traced to themselves. Servants invariably take their tone and—if they live long enough in the same places—their characters from their employers: an extravagant mistress is ever complaining of extravagant servants; a careless mistress, of slatterns; an ill-tempered mistress provokes the exercise of the same quality in her dependants; and a tyrant makes tyrants, who, if they have nothing else to tyrannize over, will kick the cats and dogs. The servants of Brown Lorton were excellent examples of the correctness of this theory—they were *pretenders*—not satisfied with being in the service of a wealthy commoner, they aped the distinction of My Lord Duke, My Lady Duchess, and affected style and station. Under the idea that the family were going to a long-talked-of ball, they had fixed on the evening of Horace Brown's unexpected arrival for a little display of their own; and that same love of display so far interfered with Mrs. Claggitt's prudence, that she permitted the unsophisticated Peter to be present at her

interview with the confectioner, that she might have an opportunity of impressing upon him a due estimate of her importance.

"The fact of it is, Mr. Puff," she commenced, "that unless you can arrange our little supper to-night, snug and scug, as the saying is, I'll manage with a more 'commodating gentleman."

"My dear lady," replied the *honest* dealer, "can't you listen to reason; how *can* a tradesman live at this rate; do I not furnish the suppers up-stairs at so much a-head?"

"I know you do," said Mrs. Claggitt, "and a fine penny you make of it: you send in all the fowls, tongues, hams, and game, uncarved; the gentlemen won't cut them up—the ladies can't, so that more than half is returned to you."

"To be sure it is, from such houses as yours," replied the confectioner; "but there's many won't put up with such things, and have their own poultry and game up from their country-seats. So you see the obligation to look sharp is more on us than ever; if it

wasn't for the returned dishes, I should put food in other people's mouths, but none in my own. Why, my good Mrs. Claggitt, what comes from a supper here, or in Mayfair, furnishes one to the shabby-genteels in the smaller squares; what comes from them sets out another, Oxford-street way, and beyond Tottenham-court-road. I have at this moment a pheasant that has taken his stand at seven supper-tables!—the fellow is woundy tough; but with fresh browning, and tasteful garnishing where incisions have been attempted, you would be surprised how well he looked as I was packing him and a few other stale matters off to the Regent's Park."

"Ah!" said Mrs. Claggitt, with an important toss of her head, "that may do very well for such people, but it would not do here, I assure you: we know a sheep's head from a carrot, as the song says, and never will countenance such imposition;—just and fair, just and fair—that's always what I will stand up for; and I has my reward: my mistress always says, 'My Claggitt is a treasure.'"

"My dear lady!" exclaimed the man of pastry, when the housekeeper had sufficiently exulted in her own praise, "you do not suppose *I* would treat *you* in that way; I am sure, though you said the last brace of birds I sent carved, were tough, they were fresh; upon my honor, they had never shown but once, and that was at Lady Flasherton's, who never cares how little people eat, for she is mean enough to take twenty-five per cent. off every uncut dish returned—she is, indeed."

"The mean monster! She, too, that Miss Maxwell is always up-crying—but our supper."

"'Pon my soul," said the confectioner, "I can't do it under four shillings a-head."

Peter was on the point of exclaiming, that well might Mrs. Brown Lorton think Claggitt a treasure, when she bargained so conscientiously for every atom, but he remembered, just in time, that something had been said of suppers down-stairs; and an undefined conviction that Mrs. Claggitt was absolutely bargaining for herself, not her mistress, came upon him at the moment. The confectioner, after

a pause, continued, " Think of the poundage-money that goes amongst you gentlemen and ladies—think of that, Mrs. Claggitt—servants are harder to deal with than their masters."

" And well they may be," sighed ' the treasure ;' " well they may be ; what have they to look to, but their little earnings ; service is no inheritance ; it may be here to-day, and gone to-morrow, with the best of us ; they have plenty here at present : but Oh ! Mr. Puff, they are so extravagant—so fond of show—nothing but company, company ;—still, I say nothing ; I have been a good friend, and got you a deal of custom ; so, indeed, you must give our supper in for three and six each !"

" If I do, you can't have a drop of wine with it," replied the conscientious tradesman ; " not a drop."

" I won't stand for the wine," replied Mrs. Claggitt ; " Mr. Harris and Mr. Joshua can manage that ; but, positively, you must let us have in a couple of bottles of your cherry-bounce."

" Oh, Mrs. Claggitt, Mrs. Claggitt !" ex-

claimed the polite man of pastry; "I hope you will never want that, as long as my cellar is in existence."

"I shouldn't be so particular," said the dame, "but that Mr. Brown Lorton's brother is come, and this is his valet, Mr. Pike, and we want to treat him."

"Thank e'e, thank e'e," replied Peter, "but I never eat suppers; 'to bed with the lamb, and up with the lark, makes service light work,' they say in my country." Mr. Puff made no observation upon Peter's rusticity, and Mrs. Claggitt continued, "Jellies and trifle, and all, you know—all nice, and served about eleven—just as they go, you know—and pray mind who you send, for there was a woundy piece of work about the fruit-knives."

"Mrs. Claggitt, I have told you before, that none of my men had to do with them; they're honest to the back-bone, and never touch a thing—belonging to my connexions."

"Good-bye, then, Mr. Puff, and—Puff—there's a dear man—if you *can* put it in at three shillings a-head, do. What, you can't?

well, then, we'll make it out at the next bill; settle it and the last *petty suppé* in the Christmas account. Ah, Puff! Puff! you know our little treats never cost you a farthing!"

"There's an honest housekeeper, with a vengeance," thought the tradesman, as he ran up the area steps; "but what can I do? In those *parvenu* houses a mistress would think it degrading to look after her household: so it is the *servants* who see the bills, and not the masters."

"I think, if you please, Mrs. Claggitt," said Peter, rising, "I'll step up to my master's room, and settle his things a bit, against dinner."

"Dinner!—lunch, you mean; why, whatever alive puts dinner in the man's head at this hour?"

"Why, it's four o'clock," said Peter.

"Eight is our nominal dinner-hour," she replied; "but you may go where you please, of course. I saw Mr. Job playing draughts in the servants' hall: he forgets himself sometimes with the under-servants; but perhaps

you play, and it might amuse you for an hour or two."

In an unlucky moment, Peter went, and looked on, and tried to understand, and declared his ignorance of loo, bagatelle, and billiards, but avowed a vulgar partiality for cricket, and a knowledge of all-fours — was induced to bet — lost — accused Mr. Job of foul play—got into a dispute—was sneered at — a quarrel ensued, attended with much noise, which Bright considerably increased; in the midst of the confusion the door opened; Mr. Horace Brown, having rung his bell again and again for his usually attentive servant, resolved to ascertain the cause of his delay; and after many blunders discovered him in the servants' hall. Peter was thoroughly ashamed, no matter how great the provocation, of being drawn into a riot; his master quickly perceived that he had been made the butt of the town-bred servants, and it was too good an opportunity of venting his spleen upon a class he so thoroughly disliked.

Casting a look not easily to be forgotten by

those upon whom it fell, he drew forth a well-filled purse, and counted a considerable sum of money into Peter's hand, saying, "I should have told you, before you entered into this new society, that civility must be purchased; it has its price, like everything else in London. That gentleman," pointing to Job, "will perhaps sell you a week's decent behaviour,—for—perhaps, most correctly dressed young man, you will favour Pike (to whom, if I mistake not, you once acted as pantry-boy) by telling him the price, in gold, silver, or brass, of your forbearance—you, I perceive, are chief here; so your subordinates will claim less: but pay them all, Peter—pay them all for their civility; —you need not curtsey, ladies, I am not going to bestow a doit upon you—not a single farthing to add another to your vanities: but pay them too, if they are civil, Peter—mind you, not else—as they treat you, so let them be rewarded!"

Horace Brown could not have devised a more efficient method of compelling kind treatment. No sooner had he quitted the servants'

hall, repeating his extraordinary directions of "Pay them, Peter—pay them all—*according* to their civility," than every one offered their congratulations on the liberality of the "sweet —odd—old gentleman, his master!" Even Job Harris confessed, that, simply from a desire of frolic, he had declared that Peter lost a bet, which in fact he had won: smiles took the place of sneers; even Bright was caressed, and for his sake Mrs. Claggitt's parrot was deprived of its chicken bone—to prove how much and how highly his master was esteemed!

CHAPTER IV.

O vain to seek delight in earthly thing!
But most in courts where proud Ambition towers;
Deluded wight! who weens fair Peace can spring
Beneath the pompous doom of kesar or of king.

SHENSTONE.

"AH! you little thought," said Uncle Horace, as he sat, after his interview with Peter, in Mary's own dressing-room, tête-à-tête with his beloved niece, "you little thought I was so near, so very near you, and so happy to find that you still remembered me, and talked of me, and looked at the old bachelor's picture. What was it, Miss—Miss Maxwell called me? —an ugly—cross—pig-tailed—?"

"Hush! hush! hush!" exclaimed Mary; "indeed—indeed—she only said all that to vex me: she told me, when I was dressing, she thought you much handsomer than your picture! And papa and mamma were so very, very glad to see you! And, Oh, dear Uncle,

I am so happy now; I wish you would never go away from London."

Horace Brown was on the point of rushing into invective against the "Queen of Cities," but an unusual degree of prudence prevented him. He had come to London for a specific purpose—a purpose that concerned the happiness of his beloved niece; and he wondered she had not already inquired into the motive of his journey; he was certain she could not altogether have forgotten their parting in his garden, and the assurance he gave her there, that until marriage approached her as a curse—not a blessing—he had bidden her farewell! Yet she never seemed to care about the *motive* of his coming. Satisfied with the fact of his being come, and the knowledge that no marriage was likely to be "forced upon her," she was happy in sitting on an ottoman at his feet, and feeling that he was really under their roof. Some anxieties flitted occasionally through her little head, as she thought how papa and mamma would hit it off *now* with Uncle Horace; it never occurred to her that

"Papa's" really splendid fortune was fast diminishing, inasmuch as the interest thereof had been totally insufficient to meet the enormous expenses into which both father and mother had launched. It might have been supposed that Brown Lorton's business habits would have made it a pleasure to inspect his affairs—that in the matter of accounts he would have used the knowledge he possessed: but his mind, that is, the portion of what is called mind, which fell to his share, was anything but careful or mercenary. The management of the business had been almost totally in the hands of Horace Brown, for the younger brother, unfortunately, loved ease, and the elder, fortunately, employment; and when he found himself in London, master of a large property, straining at a place in *society*, which, with some, signifies an acquaintance with mere lords and ladies—the dread of being considered as bringing the habits of the counting-house into the vortex of the wheel, and thus clogging its movements —the fear of being called shabby—at first overpowered every consideration; and latterly,

accounts came laden with so many disagreeables, that he was glad to cast them from him altogether. His wife never cared for, never thought of expense — vain and thoughtless, the love of show, the desire to shine, to dazzle, to outvie those whose birth she laughed at, and yet would have given worlds for its advantage—this one destructive passion overpowered whatever was good in her nature; there was but one feeling that contended with it for supremacy in her feeble, yet affectionate nature, and that was — the love of her daughter. Many would have said her vanity was strongest; but the many would have been, as they often are—in the wrong.

The reduced and reducing state of Brown Lorton's finances, was an all-powerful reason why his brother should be treated with attention and politeness; and his wife, when she saw her Mary's extreme delight at his arrival, could not find it in her heart to chill its warmth; to be sure, she did hint her fears of how Uncle Horace would behave, and what he would say to My Lord this, and whether he would be

sufficiently polite to My Lady that, and Mary laughed, and said Uncle Horace was always a gentleman; and though she doubted how far his courtesy might extend to the nobility she had mentioned, merely because of their titles, which, Mary slyly added, had not had time to grow old in the peerage, yet she was certain he had too much good feeling and good sense, not to treat them as became *himself*.

Mary was right: Horace Brown was more polished in principle than in manner; and when associating with persons whose intellect was on a level with his own, they quickly discovered that the merchant's mind was filled with rich material—a fact which neither his brother or sister had the power to comprehend.

"Suppose, Mary, my dear," said Mrs. Brown Lorton, "suppose — to-day, for instance—he was to ask for porter at dinner, what would the people—the servants, say?"

"Dear Mamma," replied Mary, "that is true; Harris, I dare say, has quite forgotten uncle's habits, so he would say he had omitted the porter; to prevent which, I will tell him to have it ready. Now, do not look

so displeased; I assure you, the day I spent with Lady Ellen, her mamma, Lady Norley, drank ale—ale, at dinner!"

"Ale! my dear; are you sure of it?"

"Quite sure, Mamma; believe me, people of real rank attend much less to fashion than we do: they make fashions for themselves, yet never think about them."

"Perhaps, then," said Mrs. Lorton, "perhaps your uncle might drink ale instead of that horrid porter. Will you ask him?"

"Fie, dear Mamma, let him have what he likes," replied the sensible girl.

"You are quite sure Lady Norley really drank the ale?" again inquired Mrs. Lorton.

"Quite; and now I remember, she blamed the butler for not having porter ready, which she said she liked better with Stilton."

"My dear Mary, why did you not mention this before? I am so fond of ale, but dared not drink it, as I did not know what *people might say*. By all means, tell Claggitt or Magdalene to tell Harris to have some porter ready."

"Dear Mamma, how she torments herself

about trifles," thought Mary; "and yet how beautiful she looked!" And having given directions to the butler for the filling forth of the now permitted beverage, she seated herself where we left her, at her uncle's feet. There was a gaiety in Mary's manner, an outbreaking of the heart, itself a mine of mingled affection and mirthfulness, which fascinated all with whom she ventured to converse. She was so truthful in her nature, and she evinced that truthfulness with such unstudied grace, that it was impossible not to appreciate her rare and yet most womanly qualities. She was very anxious her uncle should like those she liked; and with the delicious open-heartedness of youth, she had some sympathies with all. The delight of her character was, that she everywhere espied roses, if not in the blossom, at least in the bud; and never did she yield to her perception of the ludicrous, without taxing her memory, when the humour was past, to discover if she had been too severe in her playful censures.

"You were not, wickedly, Uncle mine, be-

hind that cunning curtain, the whole time I was chattering to Maxy?"

"No, I suppose not," he replied, smiling; "but I heard about the crabbed, pig-tailed—"

Mary would not suffer him to finish the sentence, but began to assure him how much he had been mistaken in supposing that nobody would visit them; "indeed," she added, "we have hosts of friends!"

"Indeed!" ejaculated her uncle, doubtingly.

"Indeed," she repeated, "we have Right Honourable ones: some few there were who looked upon us coldly just at first; I do not mean they were exactly scornful; but you know they did not quite know us—indeed, that was all."

"Did not exactly know how much you were worth, and so fought shy—eh?"

"Ah, Uncle, do not traders 'fight shy,' as you call it, of 'a bad man on 'Change,' though he may be good in every other way; it is not ill-nature, only caution."

"Very good, Miss Mary, arguing with your uncle!"

"No, only reasoning. You have not told me how you like our house?"

"'Tis large and comfortless: a wren like my sweet niece should have a smaller nest: but is there nothing you would ask about—no one to remember of all—the many whom you seemed to love in your old cottage home?"

"*Seemed*, dear Uncle Horace," repeated Mary, in an offended tone; "why do you say *seemed?*"

"Because we generally inquire after what we really love. You have asked for nothing—no one. I'm glad I have not much to love!"

"Why, Uncle?"

"Because loving you is likely to give me a sufficient quantity of trouble for the rest of my life!"

"Now," exclaimed Mary, "that is exactly one of your desperately cross speeches, which I shall pretend not to hear. Say, how is my nurse?"

"Why, well; hale as a frosty morning, and healthy too."

"And how is Mrs. Pursey, and poor old

Peter—the vicar's wife—the curate and his thirteen children—old farmer Dodd, and goodman Shyers' nag, who hurt his knee while he was stealing barley—dame Buckley and her blind grandson—are they all well? Has the clerk improved in his singing? Does mother Rice sleep all sermon time—are the buttercups plenty as ever in the fallow-field—and how many puppies had Rose at her last litter? Does wild Madge rear turkeys still? And now that I have done with the dear farm, I will go to the warehouse, and ask if your head clerk, your man of cast-iron, Mr. Alexander—got the patent his heart was set on, for the construction of his imperceptible plough and tremendous crane? Now, Uncle Horace, Uncle Horace, have I lost my memory?"

"Not quite," he replied; "and yet there is one person in particular you have forgotten."

"Lame Mrs. Hickory?"

"No."

"Pretty Mary Lintott?"

"No."

"Old Grace Lightfoot and her merry grand brats?"

"No."

"Then, my dear Uncle," said Mary, blushing a little at the same time, "then, my dear Uncle, I suppose you mean some of those rich vulgar people who used to visit us, but whom, you must remember, I only saw at the town-house, when I was well enough to leave your dear cottage and be at home."

Again Uncle Horace said "No;" adding, "the person I allude to is neither rich nor vulgar. I hope I shall never have to accuse *you* of the vulgarity of affectation. Listen, Mary. Many a time have you sat for hours on my knee, in your childhood, listening to the fables I loved to invent for your amusement. I will tell you one now, though I have long been out of practice. There was an old bird once, something between an owl and a raven, for he sometimes moped like the one, and sometimes he croaked like the other; but this old bird took a fancy to a little gay goldfinch, and brought it home to his nest, and the goldfinch

learned to love him very much, and the old moping, croaking bird loved the small bird, as if it had been, indeed, better than if it had been, either an owl or a raven——"

"Ah, ah!" laughed Mary, "I have found you out. You mean yourself and me!"

Her uncle laid his hand on her head, and continued, without heeding her interruption,—

"And the old bird said, my goldfinch is dull in its cage, because I cannot companion, though I may protect, it. So, though I cannot, perhaps, catch another goldfinch to be its friend, I may be able to find some other bird to enliven its solitude. So the moping old fellow poked about, and invited a modest brown linnet to visit his goldfinch. At first the goldfinch was mightily pleased with the linnet, who gave way to it in everything; and though the pretty painted creature was at times wayward and capricious, like all pretty things, yet the brown linnet bore it all, and was gentle, and yielding, and kind——"

"My dear Uncle," interrupted Mary, laying her burning cheek upon her uncle's hand, "you need not go on; I shall be happy in-

deed to hear if the playfellow of my childhood, Harry Mortimer, be well."

"Harry Mortimer was the companion of your youth, Mary," replied Mr. Brown, gravely, "as well as the playfellow of your childhood. Let me finish my fable, and tell you how the pretty goldfinch loved a new gilded cage better than its woodbine nest, and prized the society of magpies, jays, and parrots more than the affection——"

"Uncle!" exclaimed Mary, rising and standing before her relative, while bright and holy truth beamed in her eyes, "Uncle, you do me wrong, heaven knows you do. It was Harry who preferred such company. Did he not leave you and come to London to some fine relation, who, after all, would do nothing for him; and then, when he returned to the country, used to write letters to—to—some fine lady? He told me she was his cousin, and he offered me her drawings to copy,—and—he would not tell me her name."

"You quarrelled, I suppose?" said Horace Brown, taking a larger pinch of snuff than usual.

"Oh, worse! much worse than that;—we could have made up a quarrel:—but we became stiff, and polite, and—but it matters not; I hope he is well, and all you could desire!"

"Well! oh, yes, he is well!" replied her Uncle drily; "but it has been my misfortune to see all those I love,—not many, to be sure,—do exactly what I would not wish. You, here; and then Harry—Harry's kindred, as if on purpose to plague me, must take a sudden fancy to him,—not a fancy either, *that* I could forgive,—but it was interest. His noble relative, suddenly deprived of his two sons, and having only one daughter, takes it into his magnificent pate, that it is not fitting the son of a discarded sister (whom he literally suffered, with her husband, to die of starvation) should be a trader; and, of course, I would not, could not, suffer him to remain with me; the poor fellow, though, would have—I am sure he would have—preferred it. He said so, and I never knew him utter a falsehood; no, not in compliment. I could have forgiven his kinsman's proud recognition, but for his scorn of trade; and his grandfather, his own

grandfather, was a Bristol merchant; think of that!" persisted Horace, so indignant at the peer's forgetfulness, that he almost forgot his own object, until recalled to it by Mary's inquiry, "if Harry—if Mr. Mortimer, was in London?"

"To be sure he is—came up with me—and his relation's fine carriage met him at Hounslow."

"At Hounslow!" repeated Mary—a new light bursting upon her all at once. "Why, my dearest friend, Lady Ellen Revis, told me their carriage was going to-day to Hounslow to meet her cousin, whom she hoped would reside with them."

"To be sure!" replied Uncle Horace, stooping to caress Bright, who had, despite all obstacles, found out his master; "to be sure; Lady Ellen Revis is his cousin;—now you know her name. Look at that poor dog!—there's affection — there's fidelity! — there, Bright, that will do—but, God bless me, Mary you are fainting!"

CHAPTER V.

'Tis a strange thing, this depth of love—
Which dwells within the human heart:
From earth below—to heaven above—
In each and all—it finds a part.

L. E. L.

"I CANNOT, Mother—I am not able—my head aches—indeed, indeed, I cannot go—do not ask me—I shall not be missed—pray, pray do not ask me."

"But Mary, dearest Mary, think, my child, of the importance of being seen in that house, when the very persons I have been trying to meet ever since we have been in town will all be there! I know you have dined with Lady Ellen and her mother since the death of his lordship's sons; but that was when there was nobody there."

"I cannot help it, Mamma: I cannot go."

"And your beautiful dress!—Come, darling, let Magdalene bathe your temples with eau

de Cologne. You must really make an effort. See what a lovely colour you have got! Come, Mary! What will her ladyship say?"

"I do not care," replied Mary Lorton, almost petulantly, and burying her face in the rich cushion of the sofa.

"Not care what the Countess of Norley says!" repeated Mrs. Brown Lorton, in sad astonishment. "But your friend, Lady Ellen, what will she say?"

"Friend!" sighed Mary. "Friend!—I have no friend!"

"My blessed child!" exclaimed her affectionate mother, throwing herself, jewelled and all-radiant as she was, by her daughter's side. "What is the matter—or what do you mean? But I see how it is. Your uncle Horace has been preaching up something against the aristocracy—putting things into your head. I might have imagined that when he came to London everything rational would be turned topsy-turvy."

"No, Mother; he has not said a word against the aristocracy; and, indeed, has put

nothing new into my head. If I am asked for by any one, simply say, I am not well."

In vain did Mrs. Brown Lorton pray, intreat, and suggest remedies. Mary was always a little obstinate, and now she was firm; besides, her mother, anxious upon two accounts, saw that her beloved one was really ill; her cheek was flushed, not with health, but a feverish hectic. Her eyes were brilliant —her pulse quick. Anxious as Mrs. Lorton was about splendour, success, reputation, and "what people would say," she was more anxious for Mary's health. At first she thought that her daughter for once had caught the tone of modern society, and become capricious. But as Miss Maxwell said, "Young ladies, except they are oddities, do not exercise that quality unless when their dress does not please, or their jewels are old-fashioned." Mary had not these provocatives. The white crape was a miracle of taste; and as to her *bijouterie!*—Storr and Mortimer took good care that nothing of hers should merit the reproach. No: it was evident that Mary was

ill—too ill to venture to a *fête* from which she had anticipated much pleasure, and her mother much success; and Mrs. Brown Lorton came to the conclusion (for go, she said, she *must*), as she stepped into her carriage, that it was all Uncle Horace's fault. Mary had been so well in the morning—so pleased at her uncle's arrival—so delighted at the prospect of being with Lady Ellen—so charmed with her dress!—It was his fault: he had excited her, and brought back to her mind the scenes of her childhood, and had most likely said something, that—but, in short, Uncle Horace was to blame, though she wisely resolved not to tell him so. And where had he wandered? After putting all things into confusion, from the kitchen to the attics, he had gone out of the house, nobody knew where; only saying to the porter, that he would return at night!

Heavy were the hearts of the *parvenus* as they rolled to the splendid house where they well knew they were welcomed only for the sake of their wealth! What lives of mortifi-

cation and misery do hundreds drag on in the salons of London! Even the *privileged* become heart-sick and weary of the eternal glare, and glitter, and tinsel of the world's great crush-room; but woe to those who have to endure the sneer, and the contempt, and the sarcasm! How many do I know, who in their own proper sphere would be honoured and respected, and yet seem willing to be trampled upon, merely, like poor Mrs. Lorton, from a desire to know what people *would* say, a dread of what they *might* say! Oh, the paltriness of mere worldly ambition! How sad it is that people are content to sink in their own esteem, from a miserable desire to rise in the esteem of others!—as if it were possible to attain that of others, while losing one's own!

The Brown Lorton equipage was as well appointed as any that crowded the noble Square, and the liveried attendants twice as numerous as they need have been; and yet Mr. Brown Lorton's heart always sank within him at the first announcement of his name;

and Mrs. Brown Lorton never felt at home, though convinced that her jewels were as resplendent as those of any of the Lady L.s or Mrs. B.s, that lent light and loveliness to the gorgeous rooms.

Life, long and happy, to English beauty! Despite all that has been, or ever will be said of its fragility, its danger, its destruction,—it is a blessed thing to look upon, and live amongst. Talk of its fading!—it never fades: it is but transferred from face to face. The bud comes forth as the blossom is perfected, and the bud bursts into blossom but to hide the falling leaves, fragrant amid the decay of the parent flower! Then the beauties of our country are so varied. The peasant girl, gifted with pearl-like modesty—and the courtly maiden, set, as her birth-right, in a golden circlet, the intellectual face beaming intelligence—and the English matron, proud as Cornelia of her living jewels! Nor is the perfectness of English beauty confined to any class. In summer time you meet it everywhere:—by the hedge rows—in the streets—in the mar-

kets—at the Opera, where, tiers on tiers, hundreds upon hundreds of lovely faces glitter and gleam, and smile and weep; and then you wonder whence they come, and bless your fortune that they so congregate to harmonize the sight, in sweet accordance with the ear. Even in Lady Norley's crowded rooms there was a crush of beauty; yet Mrs. Lorton might be forgiven for her earnest longing that Mary had been there. It was, poor woman, a triumphant hour in her estimation, when the mistress of the *fête* took her hand as she passed on; and when Lady Ellen Revis hung upon her arm, inquiring for her chosen friend, "Mary, dear Mary," her exaltation was complete. If inquiries for a beloved child ever could sound wearisomely in a mother's ear, Mrs. Brown Lorton would have tired of Lady Ellen's anxiety. And there were many others who had looked eagerly for the in-coming of the heiress, who soon lounged elsewhere, when they found she would not shine forth that night. Mrs. Brown Lorton, too, was doomed to a surprise in recognising in Lord Norley's

heir the youth, the very Harry Mortimer, whom she *feared* at one time her daughter loved all too well.

Mary longed to be alone: nor, indeed, was there much difficulty in persuading Miss Maxwell that she would be better by herself, or at least with her attendant, Magdalene — "better to be perfectly quiet."

It was easy to be quiet with Magdalene; Miss Maxwell hated her with so earnest a hatred, that she was in no degree sorry to heap any annoyance on her, that did not make her of value in the eyes of a mistress who loved to treat all things kindly.

"You make fools of the servants by your indulgence," said she, one day, to Mary.

"Do I?" replied the young lady, gently; But then I make myself happy by it."

"Magdalene," said her mistress, "I think you would be better in my dressing-room, or perhaps with the housekeeper."

"Do you desire me to go," replied the girl: "If you wish me away, I am gone. But I am well, very well here, if it is your pleasure."

Mary fell into a reverie, and Magdalene continued her needle work. Suddenly Mary looked up, and observed that Magdalene's tears were dropping silently upon her thin, white hands, as she sat in the recess of the window, bending over her work, her high features in strong relief from the crimson curtain at her back, her eyes cast down, their lashes bent with the tears that rushed from beneath their snowy pent-house, and her tall graceful figure curved like that of a Grecian nymph. Her mistress thought she had never seen anything more lovely: the tears flowed so unceasingly, and the features remained so perfectly colourless and marble-like, that it suggested to Mary the idea of a weeping statue, where nought but tears had life. She plied her needle continually, and yet it was evident that she was reading passages of memory, or the feelings of her own soul—she was not with external objects.

"Magdalene!" said Mary.

The girl started, wiped her eyes, and in an instant was by her young lady's couch.

"Magdalene," continued Mary, "you are either ill or unhappy—have you had any words with the servants?"

"No, Madam."

"Are you ill?"

"No, indeed, thank you most kindly, I am not."

"Then you are unhappy, Magdalene; do you want money? Why do you smile?"

"My dear young lady," replied the girl, "I hope you will not think about me: I am low-spirited; you cannot understand — God forbid you should—what that is. I do not, thanks to your generosity, want money; and you will forgive me when I tell you, that I smiled only because rich persons—rich ladies —think that every sorrow may be cured by gold!"

"I do not think so, Magdalene; God knows I do not: I am both young and rich, and yet I know perfectly, there is much that neither youth nor wealth can purchase. Do not let me see you weeping; I cannot bear to see people—particularly those whom I esteem—in

sorrow; and, Magdalene, your being my servant does not prevent my valuing the good, the superior qualities which God has given you."

The maiden threw herself on her knees by her young lady's couch, and pressed her hand gratefully and affectionately to her lips.

"I know it, Madam, I know that you have treated me—Oh, so differently from others! May God bless you—bless you for it. I ought to be cheerful and contented with so kind a mistress—it is wrong—wicked—not to be so: but it is *not always easy to be thankful and resigned in that sphere of life to which it has pleased God to call us.*"

Mary only sighed; said a few more kind words to her attendant; told her to put by her work and take a cheerful book as her companion into her dressing-room, whence she would call her when she wanted her for anything.

"Poor Magdalene!" exclaimed Mary; "and does she, too, suffer from this straining after rank, this sighing for seats in forbidden places,

as my uncle calls it! Alas! I could not reprove her ambition, it is so like our own: the maid sighs to be the mistress—the mistress to be greater still—so goes the world!" Mary rose from her couch, and paced up and down her chamber; a glass door opened from it into her dressing-room, and through the thin silk curtains that hung across the glass, Mary could distinctly see her servant bending over the book she had directed her to read. The feelings of the heiress, as she passed to and fro, were not enviable: her Uncle's strong appeal to them had worked upon her, and brought the "brown linnet" of his fable forcibly to her remembrance; perhaps he had never been banished from it: but it is extraordinary how completely the business and fashions of the world are at variance with the affections. Instead of shutting young ladies up in the silence and solitude of their own chambers as a cure for love, it would be wiser to place them in the vortex of society, and set it turning, or rather, let it turn itself. It is in no way extraordinary, that persons immured in the country

should remember their friends—they have nothing else to do; but commend me to the friendships and affections that stand the test of the whirling world, with its changes, its lures, its temptations. Mary had certainly loved Harry Mortimer; had been deeply wounded at his refusing to tell *even* her, whose letters he received, and whose drawings he offered her to copy:—on the subject of his family he had always been painfully silent. Mary had known and loved his mother in her childhood; but Lord Norley's elevation to the Peerage had been of recent date, for when first his nephew visited him, he had little prospect of an earldom; he was then only a law lord, but with pride enough to furnish a kingdom of dukedoms. Horace Brown, usually deficient in grace or gentleness of manner, had a way of his own of doing good, as rare as it is uncommon: he was fond of giving—as he would himself have said, if anything could induce him to speak of his own good offices—"young people a push on in the world;" and in many instances he managed these "pushes"

so skilfully, that the hand which gave them remained unseen. He had known, and some persons hinted, had loved Mrs. Mortimer, in her youth; but be that as it may, neither she nor her husband would have suffered as they did suffer, if he had conjectured what their situation really was. After their death Harry became to him as a son; and a stranger would have supposed that Horace Brown derived some great advantage from the society of the youth, whom he treated with the attention of an equal, and the frankness of a friend: to be sure, Harry tormented him sadly; never could be kept to book-keeping; scrawled poetry over half the ledgers, and cut up whole hundreds of pens, that he might try them, as he always did, by writing the simple word "Mary." The first wish of Horace Brown's heart was, that his two darlings should be dear to each other; but whatever skill he might have in human nature, on the whole, he had none in that most gossamer portion of it called "love:" it was too fine, too intricate, too fanciful for him. If he had let things alone, I doubt if

Mary and Harry would have been so apart; but he was generous hearted, and fond of making well, better; and the only skill he ever manifested in the matter was in the application of his little fable. Still it must be confessed, that the effect of his allegory was increased a hundredfold by the fact of Harry's being in London, a received guest at Lord Norley's house, the cousin and correspondent of her friend Lady Ellen Revis.

For worlds she would not have met him, as she knew she must, under such circumstances. A common-minded girl, a girl of even more than ordinary mind, would have rejoiced at playing off a discarded lover, of exhibiting herself, with as many attendants as a peacock has eyes in his gorgeous tail: but let it be remembered, that Mary had loved—nay, did love Harry Mortimer, though she did not believe it herself. Ah! love often fastens the bandage over his own eyes.

"To think," she whispered within her bosom, "to think that I must lose my friend! the only one amongst the hosts of girls whom

I have met in London—that I care for! We have walked together — talked together — sung together. When I have been weak, who strengthened me?—but Lady Ellen. When I have been foolish, who reproved?—'twas Lady Ellen. Proud I have been—sometimes vain of my wealth, who told of proper motives for ambition?—the Lady Ellen. So perfect is she in all wisdom, one would have thought she learnt of Uncle Horace. I looked to her for council, as I would have looked to him; and when the great ones sneered, and would have crushed me by civil coldness, who gave me courage which I might well lack, and showed that courage bravely in my cause—dear Lady Ellen! But I must lose her now—give her quite up, and have no more a friend! I do not, cannot blame *him* for his preference; but it was pitiful not to trust me. I, who loved him *like a sister!* He never would speak of his great London relatives; but, she —she might have mentioned him. She must have known well who we were! I thought I had a friend for life! Harry is nothing to me

now—absolutely nothing! How could he be? But, oh! to lose my friend!" and the artless and unintentional sophist buried her face in her hands, as she knelt by her couch, and wept bitterly.

Poor innocent!—She never asked herself *why* Lady Ellen could not continue to be her friend—it never occurred to her to examine the structure of the barrier which her imagination had erected between them—she never once asked *why* the cherished friendship of her soul was ended—she never inquired how it was that she could not meet *together,* two, with whom, when apart, she had spent so many happy hours! She repeated a hundred times to herself that "Harry was nothing to her:" and yet the feeling of intense misery with which she contemplated the possibility of his being united to his cousin, swept all tranquillity and comfort from her soul. She had wrought herself into the perfect belief that he loved Lady Ellen, and was beloved of her; and while she tried to convince herself that she prayed for their happiness, she wept the bitter tears of

youthful anguish. At last, when the night was far spent, she slept, and though her sleep was fevered and troubled, Magdalene rejoiced that she had found repose at last. The affectionate attendant watched with untiring patience by the bed-side of her mistress; and yet she heard not the light step of one who entered the chamber—until a gentle hand rested on her shoulder!

Magdalene rose and curtsied; but no word was exchanged; though the visiter took her seat by the sleeper's couch. It was a beautiful sight. The lovely head of Mary Lorton, resting on, without crushing, the fringed pillow, her arms crossed upon her bosom, which scarcely heaved beneath their pressure. Lady Ellen Revis—for she it was who had quitted the festivities of her own house to inquire after the health of her friend—Lady Ellen, half sitting, half supporting herself on the couch, the drapery of which, descending from a golden star in the ceiling, nearly shrouded her figure; while her sparkling, intelligent, but restless features were turned on the sleep-

ing countenance of her favourite. Magdalene had withdrawn to her old seat in the window, and the *contour* of her delicate form never looked more graceful than it did then—her head bent down, and her hands clasped on her knees—in an attitude of intense watchfulness. Lucky was it, for the sake of my picture, that the drapery did in part conceal the figure of Lady Ellen.

Hers was one of those clear, penetrating, intellectual countenances which strike immediately, and are never forgotten. Her eyes were of a deeply pure blue, full of tenderness and fire; her brow was high, broad, and full; her nose well shaped; and her mouth capable of every variety of expression, from the most severe reproof, to the bland and persuasive smile which wreathes the lips with beauty; her hair was magnificent, shading in its depths to the deepest brown, and coming out in the sunshine with silken brightness; her skin was clear; her complexion almost colourless, except when animated or startled; then it flushed with the impetuosity of an

ardent temperament to the deepest crimson: but, alas! there ended her beauty. Nature decreed that this lovely flower should blossom on a bended stem; the stalk curved beneath the rich burthen of its coronal. She was deformed; not much, not half so much as many who pass through society without thinking it a misfortune; but *she* felt it in all its aggravated bitterness—it was the bane of her existence—the drop of poison which tainted the whole cup. Her mother, proud of her talents, her wit—nay, though it was a foolish pride as applied to a female, because it makes them enemies, not friends—proud of her learning—endeavoured, but vainly, to make her forget it, and sometimes imagined she had succeeded; but she was mistaken; the consciousness of deformity never left her for a moment—she exaggerated the impression it made on others—she watched the direction taken by every eye; and compliments really bestowed with sincerity, and which she justly deserved, she set down as sneers, or as polite forgeries on the bank of truth, which pass current with

the unwary for sterling gold; perhaps it was the truthfulness of Mary's character that drew her so suddenly, yet so strongly, towards her—perhaps, also, she was pleased at finding some one, who relied on her for direction and support—who loved her entirely for herself.

After gazing on the countenance of her friend for a considerable time, Lady Ellen beckoned Magdalene into the next room.

"Has she been long ill?" she inquired. "She walked an hour with me yesterday, and then appeared quite well!"

"She did not complain, my lady, until this evening."

"Not until this evening!" repeated Lady Ellen. "And now to have such a flushed cheek and fevered hand! Besides, Magdalene, I thought — I am certain I saw the shining of dried up tears upon her cheek."

"Indeed, my lady!" was the maiden's answer.

"Has any thing occurred to displease, to discompose her?"

"I cannot say, my lady," was again the girl's taciturn reply.

"Her Uncle Horace is arrived. Surely that gave her pleasure?"

"Oh, indeed it did, my lady!—great delight; perhaps the very excitement has made her ill."

"Do you really think happiness makes persons ill?" inquired Lady Ellen, fixing her piercing eyes on Magdalene.

"I cannot speak from my own experience," she said. "I have never been tried that way; but I have heard it is so, my lady."

Lady Ellen again rested her eyes on Magdalene for an instant, and then returned to the bedside of her sleeping, but untranquil friend.

Mary's countenance had lost that beautiful expression of placidity which characterized it a little time before. Her arms were tossed upon the coverlet, and her brilliant cheek was wet with weeping. She moaned and murmured, and was evidently struggling with such painful feelings, that Lady Ellen thought it would be kindness to dispel her slumbers.

"Mary, waken, dear Mary—Mary, waken," she repeated, and the full rich tones of her

voice sounded like a softened strain of church music through the chamber. "Waken, my dear friend!"

When Mary awoke, she looked confused and agitated, and gazed earnestly in Lady Ellen's face. She then pressed back the hair from her temples, and held her throbbing brows between both her hands.

"Dear Mary, do you not know me? Will you not speak to Ellen Revis!" said Lady Ellen, trying to withdraw her hands.

"Know you: oh, yes! I know you well. I see you now—I saw you in my dream! Oh, how I wish you were not here!"

"Do you, indeed! Yet see how obstinate I am to remain—and how ungrateful you are to me, who left my own home at this time—past—long past midnight, and all that I might be with you. Dear Mary, you do not surely wish me gone!"

"And the company—the music," said Mary, shaking off the remembrance of what was frightful in her dream, and awaking fully to the present, though it was shadowed by the

past. "You left your house on your own birth-day fête to come to me—and then you woke me from that painful dream!—but leave me now, dear Lady Ellen—it seems unkind, ungrateful—but I am better by myself."

"You call me *Lady* Ellen!" replied her friend. "And you beg of me to leave you. Oh, Mary! when I lingered in bitter suffering after my brother's death—when my parents were so fully absorbed in their own sorrows that they never heeded mine—who sympathized with me, and watched in my sick room for hours, and days, and weeks? I never drove *her* from me: and will you be less kind to me, than I to you;—you who are far kinder to others than I am to any, save yourself?"

Mary replied not to this tender speech, more tender though it was than any she had ever heard from Lady Ellen, who was chary of her affection.

"Some other time," she said at last, hiding her face at the same moment from her friend: "Some other time, but not to-night. I have been agitated:—my Uncle came and talked to me of younger, happier days——"

She had paused in her confidence—I had almost written that whoever does so, does not deserve a friend; but the world, I know, thinks differently; and I must remember that Mary paused, not because she doubted that friend's fidelity, but because she doubted her own worthiness. Passing abruptly from the subject, she inquired if her mother was come home.

Lady Ellen was both too young, and too steady in her own affections, to imagine that Mary was capable of sudden and capricious change. She thought that illness had made her nervous and irritable; but that when it passed away, whether it proceeded from a mental or a physical cause, she would be, as she had ever been to her until within the last twenty minutes.

She told Mary that Mrs. Lorton had not returned—that she knew she had been anxious to get away, but found it almost impossible. "It is the world, dear Mary!—the world! which I flatter myself I am better acquainted with than most of the Lady Evelinas and Jemimas who enact heroines in life and novels,

at the age of two-and-twenty! This same knowledge of the world whispered in my ear, that its being buzzed about that a young heiress's Uncle, having arrived in London, in the possession of at least a hundred thousand sterling—reasons for the good opinion of the world—and intending to bestow these alchymists, that turn evil into good, upon his niece—she, the said niece, rose amazingly in the barometer of public favour; and to conclude my speech with a simile—We all know how frequently the lord of the feast takes the mother down to supper, that he may take the daughter off for life."

Mary almost smiled.

"I sent your Uncle an invitation," she continued; "but he did not come. I thought I should have seen him here. When your mother extinguished our lights by the announcement of your illness ——"

"You invited Uncle Horace?" said Mary, raising herself on her couch.

"To be sure I did! The moment I heard he was in town, I wrote him, with my own hand, a most lady-like note, on plain white

paper, which a certain long known, yet new-found relative of mine, promised to deliver!"

Mary had not courage to look up to see if Lady Ellen blushed, for she blushed herself, and that effectually prevents a girl from observing the blushes of others. Her ladyship continued:—

"You never mentioned Harry to me:—and I little fancied that the Mary Brown he once talked of, was my friend Mary Lorton. Shall I tell you the story now, as you seem better, and have not sent me away, and have forgotten your ugly dream. I never dance, you know, so am not tired, and can sit with you all night. Ah! little I thought when laughing,—no, perhaps I ought to say sneering,—at the absurdity of first love, that——"

Mary did not suffer her to finish her observation, and little did Lady Ellen imagine the bitter pangs she had inflicted on her young friend, the "*once* talked of" rung upon her heart—the "sneer" entered it; yet with a strong effort she lifted her head from the pillow, and said—

"Not, indeed, now—not to-night. I pray

you, Lady Ellen, *dear* Ellen, if you will, no more to-night. — Magdalene, ring for Lady Ellen's carriage. — Go down with her yourself. Do not, oh, do not flash your eye upon me! I am ill and miserable! I know you meant this visit kindly, very kindly. Forgive me—say you forgive me! To-morrow I shall be more myself."

"Dear Mary, shall I come to-morrow?" inquired Lady Ellen, as she folded her Cashmere over her shoulders, hurt, though not angered, at Mary's strange behaviour. "Shall I come to-morrow?"

"I do not know!—yes, perhaps you had better. Now—thanks—and good night!"

"It is very strange!" muttered Lady Ellen, as she descended the stairs, closely followed by the attentive Magdalene. "It is very strange!" she repeated, and then turning to the attendant, she added, "If your mistress has not returned before I arrive at home, I will request her to do so immediately."

While she was in the act of speaking, she heard a carriage roll up to the door, and before

it was almost possible to imagine that the steps were down, Mrs. Brown Lorton, pale as a spectre—the jewels sparkling on her brow, while the eyes beneath were wild, yet rayless, totally regardless of her dress, without the slightest covering to protect her beautiful arms and bosom from the keen morning air, which was mingling with the heavier breeze of night — rushed across the hall, passed Lady Ellen and Magdalene without noticing either, flew up stairs—and well Magdalene knew, as the sound of the footsteps were lost in the distance, that she never even stopt at her daughter's door. The hall porter seemed really awake, and turned his powdered head upwards to ascertain if it was his mistress or a ghost; the footman held the door in his hand, and his mouth opened with astonishment; Lady Ellen was obliged to call up her own carriage, which had driven away to make room for Mrs. Lorton's; and as some little delay occurred, and she stood in the entrance, she observed a tall man, closely muffled in a capacious cloak, stride round the corner of the

Square, and stop directly on the *pavé,* from whence he looked into the porch where she waited. With the utmost coolness he examined the armorial bearings of both carriages, then turned away. The night clouds hung heavily upon the morning, still the eastern horizon gave tokens of the coming day, and the gas burnt so brightly, that as the carriage passed the inquisitive stranger, who was retracing his steps, Lady Ellen had an indistinct remembrance that he had been a guest that same night at her father's house!

CHAPTER VI.

Earth has no unpolluted spring,
From the curs'd soil some dangerous taint they bear;
So roses grow on thorns, and honey wears a sting.
Dr. Watts.

On the same night that Lady Ellen Revis visited Mary Lorton, anxious to ascertain the cause of her indisposition, and to contribute to its removal. On the same night that poor Mary's heart was torn by the renewal of her earliest affection—jealousy of one whom she imagined a rival—and regrets at the consequent loss of her dearest friend. On the same night that Mrs. Brown Lorton returned almost a maniac from the festive scene where, under the influence of peculiar reports, she achieved a distinction which she had long panted for in vain. On the same night that Lady Ellen threw herself back upon the rich cushions of her carriage, and pondered upon the possibility of all the Brown Lortons having gone

mad together. On that night Horace Brown returned, about the hour of one, to his brother's house, inquired anxiously and tenderly for his niece, and having ascertained from Magdalene, that she was only suffering from an indisposition called nervous, betook himself to his chamber, rang his bell, again, again, and again! At last, one of the "gentlemen," of the order of hall and pantry, with a somewhat unsteady step, and a breath perfumed by the wine and confections that constituted the petit soupér of the lower regions, for which Mrs. Claggitt had so amply provided in the morning, condescended to attend the summons, and to inform Mr. Horace Brown, that "*his valet*" (alas! poor Peter!) had gone out, and had not yet come back. The man thought it strange that Mr. Brown should not express displeasure at his absence.

"Did he take the dog with him?" inquired Uncle Horace.

"No, Sir; he tied him up in his own bedroom."

"Then bring him here."

"Here, Sir!" repeated the man, in evident astonishment, looking round at the magnificent furniture.

"Yes, to be sure, here; you do not suppose I am going to sleep in this cut-throat city without a dog in my room?"

The servant staggered a bow and withdrew. Nearly half an hour elapsed before he returned, holding the unlucky Bright at arm's length by the skin of his neck. The poor animal screamed with joy at the sight of his master, jumped, wagged his stumpy tail, and having expressed his delight in true dog-like fashion, sprang to the foot of the bed, and curled himself round, placing his black snubish nose upon his stubbed legs, saying, as plainly as dog could say, "You see, I know how to make myself at home!"

"Do you wish the hanimal to remain on the bed, Sir?" inquired the half-grinning servant, who waited further orders.

Horace Brown made no reply to the somewhat impertinent question, but desired that

Peter might be sent to him the moment he returned.

Mary had not confided the adjustment of her uncle's chamber entirely to the housemaid; she had, in the early part of the day, placed a bunch of roses on the sofa-table, which stood in the centre of the room; roses, fair, white, and redolent of perfume; there were violets also, not many, but so sweet; and one or two sprigs of the domestic wall-flower. She had also scattered a few books, with writing materials, on the same table; and, placed upon an embroidered cushion, reverently apart from every other volume, was a bible, which her uncle had given her on her twelfth birth-day.

"Dear Mary!" he exclaimed, taking up the sacred book,—and the "dear Mary" was repeated more than once, when he found a peculiar little mark, simply three lines crossed like the rays of a star, opposite the commencement of his favourite chapters. I have often noted how strongly people illustrate their own characters by their predilections for particular portions of Scripture. The high-wrought tempe-

rament delights in the sublimity of Isaiah, the splendour of Job, and the fine poetry of the Psalms. The pensive always derive a melancholy pleasure from the Lamentations of Jeremiah. The Proverbs are dwelt upon both by great and by little thinkers;—those who think deeply make them as texts; and those who think in a small way are glad of a sentence which saves them trouble. Many a dormant orator has been roused by the dignified eloquence of Paul. Uncle Horace, however, did not deny how infinitely he preferred the character of Peter.

I knew a purse-proud man once, who was fond of removing his neighbour's landmark, and of building houses and granaries of immense extent; this man affected strict and singular devotion, yet he would never attend church when that portion of the Scripture was appointed to be read which treats of the rich man who pulled down his barns to build greater, and whose soul was required of him that same night! Uncle Horace could not with justness, in my opinion, be called a

religious man; he was strictly, nobly moral, a firm supporter of church and state, and was therefore glad at heart to see that Mary remembered his favourite chapters, not so much for the sake of what the chapters contained, in the abstract, as because they were connected with himself. Many there are who will be very angry with Uncle Horace for this, and very angry with me for recording it; but I can only repeat, that such was the fact, and that the general excuse of poor human nature must be offered for him, as well as for us all, at least fifty times during the sixteen hours out of the twenty-four, which we are supposed to employ in the pleasures or business of life.

Horace Brown looked over the beautifully-bound books, and a positive sneer curled his upper lip whenever he opened an annual or a novel. Really his taste in literature must have been very extraordinary, for, in the present enlightened age, when entertaining knowledge walks the streets, and the intellectual is so cultivated, to the exclusion of bodily employment, that if the world does not of itself

produce its fruits in due season, we shall have no fruits at all, from the simple fact, that THE MIND is too much occupied with the mind to heed the body:—his taste in literature must have been very extraordinary, for surely, as I said, or intended to say, an enlightened age, like the one it is said we live in, would never encourage any species of art or literature that was not eminently advantageous to the mind. Of this future generations will judge, when they record and criticise our productions.

As the night waned on, Horace Brown paced up and down his chamber; it was one of the loveliest nights in May. He looked out upon the spacious square; and though carriage after carriage rolled past, still no one stopped at his brother's dwelling. He turned over the volumes again and again, occasionally paused, as the name of a story, or the beauty of an engraving, attracted his attention; but, it would seem, derived little amusement from his occupation; for he played with—no, not that either, for Bright was not a dog to be played with,—he could be conversed with; and

answered by a quick glance of his intelligent eye, whatever was propounded to him within the possible range of canine comprehension; therefore Horace conversed with Bright after Bright's own fashion; though, to confess the truth, the dog thought his master exceedingly absurd not to go to bed and sleep when he could, and he hinted as much to him, by keeping one eye shut during the broken dialogue which followed after St. Peter's church had sounded the hour of three! At last Master Pike made his appearance, and though Horace Brown had been for some time inclined to follow Bright's hint and example, now, with that quickness and energy of character which banishes sleep, he was as perfectly awake as if he had enjoyed comfortable and refreshing repose for many hours.

"I thought you would never return!" exclaimed his master.

"I thought so too, pretty nearly, Sir," replied Peter; "I own I thought so at one time. Sir, I'd rather navigate through Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, and every

village in the neighbourhood, than tramp again of a moonlight night, as I have done, over that Blackfriars' bridge, to say nothing of Fleet Street, and along the alleys and ways at the other side their river. Then the people are so curst—I ask your pardon, Sir,—uncivil,—that impudent scoundrel, Job Harris, *Mister* Harris, to be sure! sneered like Satan when I asked the way to Stamford Street, Blackfriars, and said he had never been in 'that there country!' There is a pretty girl, a very pretty girl, a beautiful girl, poor thing! below in the scullery, and she said, 'Mr. Peter,' said she, and stopped scouring the dripping-pan while she spoke, 'Mr. Peter,' said she, 'my brother Bob will show you the way with all the pleasure in life.' "

"Peter," interrupted Horace, "tell your story quickly; it is more important for me to know the result than the details; but before you get any further, Peter, there is one thing I must remind you of, do you remember the solemn promise you made me on quitting home?"

"About the Temperance Society, Sir?" meekly replied the jolly-looking rascal.

"No, Peter, *that* was another matter altogether." And as Horace Brown spoke, not a muscle of his face moved; he fixed his full, clear, and severe grey eye upon the rosy, good-tempered countenance of his domestic. "Another matter; yet, I must say, *almost* as important as the one to which I see I must again refer;—you promised me most solemnly that, while in London, you would steer clear of everything in the shape of a woman; and never dare, as you call it, to fall in love!"

"Yes, Sir!" said Peter, rubbing the cuff of his coat with the forefinger of his right hand.

"I would not have reminded you of it, but your wretched propensity occurred to me immediately, when you spoke of the girl below."

"Sir," exclaimed Peter, "I am not at all in love with the scullery-maid; to be sure, she handled the dripping-pan with such a gracefulness; and only for her brother Bob, Sir, I might have walked the streets all night, which,

indeed, I may say I did;—but I know myself rather better than to fall in love with a scullery-maid, for all that!"

"Peter, Peter," expostulated his master—"Peter, you remember the Manchester gipsy!"

"Sir, you are too hard upon me!" Peter Pike interrupted his master with much humility; but Horace Brown continued:

"And the sailor's wife, Peter, whose husband threw you into the Prince's Dock, at Liverpool!"

"I have told your honour fifty times," he replied, "as how she passed herself off as a widow!"

"And the knife-grinder's sister at Sheffield!"

"Your honour's memory is very good," slided in Peter.

"Good, you rascal!" said his master; "and it had need to be good; you have been little more than thirteen hours in London, and with my most important business on your hands—and yet you talk to me of the beauty of a scullery-wench!"

"The best proof, Sir, that I didn't think much of her; because, if I did——"

"Go on, go on," proceeded Horace.

"I shouldn't like to tell your honour, seeing you have little care for the tenderness of lovers!"

Horace Brown seized a boot, and felt half inclined to throw it at the head of the caricature of the tender passion that stood before him. While Peter, not by any means unaccustomed to such ebullitions of his master's temper, shrunk behind the massive bed-post, and waited till the missive of his huge displeasure had passed on its way, Horace dropped the boot, and looking at him most contemptuously, exclaimed,

"Why, you overgrown beet-root!—you ass!—the pains I have taken to save you from destruction, during the last twenty years, will be useless. You'll make a fool of yourself in your old age. You'll commit matrimony, that you will! I could pardon you for murder sooner! I *can* understand why a woman marries; but idiots, such as you, to take idiotcy

nine times worse than itself as its companion, deserves a century at the tread-mill! I see, Sir, I see,—I know, by the cut of your countenance, you have got matrimony into your head again; but if you have, you shall tramp, Sir, tramp! I'll have no married men, with slip-shod wives, and a score of brats squalling in every corner! You may presume too much upon your usefulness, Master Peter, and the confidence I have placed in you!"

"I never betrayed it!" observed Pike, standing firmly before his master, whom want of sleep, vexation at Mary's indisposition, and total dissatisfaction at the habits of a London establishment, had rendered ten times more irritable than usual.

"I do not say you did, Sirrah," he replied, for truth always found a responding note within his bosom, even in his most ill-tempered mood. "I do not say you did; but the idea of matrimony, except under very particular circumstances, makes me angry, and you know it does:—to see my brother now,—if he had not married! If he had *not* married, he

would not have turned fine gentleman;—so if he had *not* married, he would not have withdrawn; and if he had *not* married, the firm of Brown and Company, would be worth, at the least farthing, three hundred, ay, or four hundred thousand pounds!"

"And where would Miss Mary be?" inquired Pike, quietly and slyly.

"Peter," said his master, after a pause, "you are an honest fellow; only remember your promise, that's all:—and now tell me all you have seen and heard."

"It would take from this till noon to tell your honour all," replied Peter, who was somewhat of a realist, I mean practically, not theoretically. "Only the conclusion of my observations is, that the Londoners are the most curst, obstropulousest, uncivilist set I was ever amongst, Sir. At the other side of the water, I'd bet a silver bodkin, against a Whitechapel sharp, that a man's life's not worth a brass farthing,—and they be so rude!"

"You got safely back, however!"

"Ay, Sir, thanks to Bob. Well, I reached

Stamford Street, and I surveyed and kept on the look-out; and I found the number—the numbers, Sir, are the same as at Liverpool,—and I looked up at the house; but I saw nothing, nor nobody; and with that I thought I'd find something out on the sly; and so I knockt bold as thunder at the next door, and *such* a pretty girl opened it! 'My little dear,' said I——"

"Plague on it, Pike," interrupted Horace Brown, wincing as if a wasp had stung him, "that's not the way to speak to a servant!"

"Not to a man-servant, I know; but, Sir, I ask your pardon; only, what would you have me say?

"Say? why young woman, or young person, to be sure!"

"Well, Sir, I will," replied Pike, unwilling to irritate his irritable master a second time, "I will, though it sounds unfriendly. So I pronounced his name beautifully, Sir, and asked 'does he live here?'"

"'Next door,' says she, 'and I'd thank you, Master Bumpkin, to be more particular

in your number; calling me from my tins, and my hands all over whitening, daubing the door, and all from the stupidity of an old fogey!' And she slammed the gate in my face!"

"Serve you right," said Horace, rubbing his hands. "Serve you quite right, for your familiarity; I'm glad of it—a sensible, prudent girl!"

"Well, Sir, I thought it uncivil; but as I wanted most to know where *he* lived, and then to be sure it was he, I went to a public-house at the corner, and fished, and fished, until I made out that the gentleman with the foreign name was going out in his cab that night at half-past nine or ten. So I waited, and waited, and at last up drove the cab, with a beautiful iron-grey horse under it;—and at last, out came a gentleman; but so muffled in his cloak, that I could not get sight of him. So a hackney-coach coming up, I desired the man to follow the cab, and putting Bob inside, I mounted the box; and the cab went over another bridge, and then turned into a square

which the driver told me faced the house of Parliament; and there the gentleman got out, and I got down; but was too late to see his face. So I paid coachee, and stood close up to the cab. 'I tell you what, my cove,' said a brat of a boy, who could sit comfortably on my thumb-nail, and was decked out in blue livery, 'you'd better keep off, or I'll give you in charge to the po-leese; you want to steal, by your standing; keep moving, my fine fee-low, or I'll call a constable!' I did not want to make a piece of work there, or I'd have pulled him out of his snail-shell, but went away, and could not help asking a respectable-looking old man, who stood near the door, if some shabby persons, passing to and fro, in and out, in dirty boots and linen, were gentlemen? The old man looked at me, and only replied, 'They are members of the House of Commons!' Presently out came the cloak and hat I waited for, leaning on the arm of a gentlemanly, elderly man, very well dressed, who was talking to him about a petition, so that I could not see the face, nor did not hear the voice of

him I was watching. They both got into the cab, and hop-o' my-thumb clung to the back like a wren on a rick of barley. Away, then, I followed in a cab of my own, and where should the gentleman be set down, but in some square, among thousands of carriages,—at Lady Norley's, master Harry's aunt!"

"The devil!" exclaimed Horace Brown.

"So I said," continued Pike; "and still I could not see his face; but while I strolled about, the mistress's coachman spied me, and invited me to sit on his box, as the footman had gone to help some other lady's footman to drink a bottle of claret; and as the coach commanded a view of the door, I was glad of the offer; and, after some time, there was a cry—'Mrs. Brown Lorton's carriage!'—and when at last we got to the door, after a cargo of oaths that would sink a bible, there came another shout—'Mrs. Brown Lorton's carriage stops the way!' and down she came, after a bit, flying through the crowd, with anxiety, I thought, to get back to Miss Mary. The footman had not finished his claret, and I put up

the steps. As the carriage turned to drive off, down *he* came, and *then* I knew him—handsomer than ever he looked, in my opinion, and not a day older; and as he turned, first one way and then the other, he knocked up against me, as I stood on the top step, having resolved to wait till he came out. I don't think he knew me, though he stared hard too, with his black piercing eyes. I was quite satisfied, and followed little Bob, who stood at the corner; but it was astonishing, quick walker though I am, how that man flew past me; he tracked the carriage home, Sir, to the very door, and I met him returning as I left Grosvenor Place!"

"Is my brother come home?" inquired his master.

"I do not know, Sir; they told me he was to finish the night at some grand Sir's, or something, who gives wonderful good suppers."

"Oh! very likely—they will all finish somewhere, or some how or other, one of these days; and that, I suppose, ere long!" replied Horace Brown.

CHAPTER VII.

Be full, ye courts; be great who will;
Search for Peace with all your skill:
Open wide the lofty door,
Seek her on the marble floor.
In vain you search, she is not there;
In vain ye search the domes of Care!

DYER.

"I THINK," said Horace Brown to his pretty niece, as she hung over some flowers he had brought her, a few mornings after the *fête* at Lady Norley's, "I think, Mary, it would do you a great deal of good to take a ride or a walk, or both."

"I think so too," said Miss Maxwell.

"A ride, perhaps, as it will be the first time you have been out for some days."

"I perfectly agree with you, Mr. Brown," replied Miss Maxwell; "a ride decidedly would be best."

"And yet," continued Uncle Horace, "a walk might be more beneficial. The motion

of walking, with the fresh air blowing around, is so refreshing!"

"So it is, indeed, Sir; I perfectly agree with you," chimed in Miss Maxwell.

"Perhaps," persisted the worthy man, without heeding the fair echo, "if you were to order the carriage, drive to Kensington Gardens, and then walk——"

"The thing of all others I should recommend," said Miss Maxwell. "I was just thinking of it. Dear Mary, how happy you must feel in having so kind and considerate a relative!"

Horace Brown cast upon Miss Maxwell one of his withering looks, but it produced no change on her adamantine countenance, where every feature was well trained, and never disarranged by what are called emotions: hers was one of those faces which continue unchanged by time or circumstances. A pattern face to cut propriety by, to the exclusion of feeling; and yet the features were good, well-shaped, and regular.

Horace continued to try the effect of the exterminating power of his eye on Miss Max-

well rather longer than usual, but in vain; and then he said, "You pay yourself a compliment, madam!"

"Pay myself a compliment! How?" she inquired.

"Simply because you said I was kind and considerate for thinking as you thought!"

"Dear me, Mr. Brown," replied the sapient lady, "how very clever you are! I never thought of that. I declare you are wonderful! —quite."

Uncle Horace's smile, when he was annoyed, was the most bitter smile in the world; but Miss Maxwell's eyes looked as if they could not comprehend its bitterness.

"Maxy, will you ring for Magdalene, and she will get my shawl and bonnet," said Mary.

"Nay, dearest, I will go myself, and see them aired," (it was hot sunny weather), "and direct the footman to tell the coachman to get the carriage. Which carriage shall it be, Mr. Brown,—the coach, the landau, or Mary's own pony phaeton?"

"My phaeton," murmured Mary.

"Thank God, she is gone!" ejaculated Horace with a sigh, as Miss Maxwell closed the door. "Mary, what does that woman want here? she's as worrying as the tooth-ache. What do you want with her?"

"Oh, uncle, Mamma wants her! She knows everybody, and she is very good-natured and useful. Now, too, that Mamma has been ill ever since the other night, she has been so attentive, so kind; indeed, she is a kind-hearted person. She has taught me a great deal!"

"What?"

"Oh, I don't remember!—Japanning, and German cross-stitch, and the guitar!"

"Valuable acquirements, doubtless!" sneered Uncle Horace.

And Papa, even with his cook, could not order his dinners without Maxy. She resided a long time with Lady Flasherton."

"I know that," interrupted Uncle Horace; "but should like also to know in what capacity?"

"Friend, confidential friend, I suppose," replied Mary.

"Indeed! Then her friendship is to be purchased, I suppose?"

Mary had not time to reply, before Miss Maxwell, followed by Magdalene, entered.

"Don't you think, Mr. Brown, our sweet friend had better put on 'her things' here?" inquired Miss Maxwell.

"Meaning to turn me out, I suppose," replied Horace. "Then I think not. I should wish Mary to go into her room with Magdalene to dress, and so leave me here alone with you."

"Oh, Sir!" ejaculated Miss Maxwell, her heart at the moment beating more quickly than it had done for the last fifteen years; for few unmarried ladies, approaching the termination of the summer solstice, can be thrown into the society of rich unmarried men without speculating thereupon.

Most women possess a talent, and by no means an uneducated one, for matrimony. At first, with common-minded girls, it evaporates in flirtations; when that does not do, they sink into the sentimental, quote poetry,

and catch vulgar colds in their heads by "baying the moon," though, if they can help it, not in "sequestered solitude." I have known the sentimental continue after thirty; but generally speaking, ladies assume a different character at that antiquated-maidenly period they become geologists, or conchologists, or moralists, or sectarianists, or—any thing but rationalists! An unmarried lady feels herself desperately circumstanced between thirty and forty—she does not consider any of the Lords of the creation either too young or too old—she catches at all, and should be especially avoided by minors as well as majors—she grows absolutely dangerous when nearing forty, though when once that awful number is past, I have known the most indefatigable husband-hunter throw up her forlorn hope, and become, even amongst men, a tolerably safe, and a very agreeable companion. There are exceptions: poor Miss Maxwell was one certainly; for she hunted on, until hunted down by Death!

As Mary passed her uncle, she could not

avoid smiling; a piece of impertinence for which he felt very much inclined to box her ears; perhaps he would have done so, had he not remembered it was the first time a smile had wreathed her lips since they discoursed about Harry Mortimer; and how long did his anger continue when Mary smiled?

"Pray be seated, madam," said Uncle Horace, pointing to a chair.

"Oh, Sir!" again sighed the lady.

"You need not sigh, nor agitate yourself in the least," commenced Uncle Horace, when he had seated himself as far from her as he possibly could. "You need not make yourself at all uncomfortable, madam," he continued; "I know you to be a woman of good plain sense!"

Now nothing affronts a person who is in the sentimental mood so much as to be charged with *plain* sense; and Maxy was going to assure Horace that it was a quality she knew nothing of; but he waved his hand, impatient of interruption.

"In short, madam, you are a mere woman of the world!"

"Sir!" ejaculated the Duenna, as if doubting that she heard aright.

"A mere woman *of* the world. Anxious to drive the best bargain you can for yourself, and perfectly careless what becomes of everybody else *in* the world!"

"Sir!" repeated the lady in a tone of unfeigned astonishment.

"Such is the truth, and you know it; and what is to me more important, I know it!" And Uncle Horace knit his brows firmly, but not fiercely.

"Mr. Brown!"

"You may, you might, talk yourself dumb, madam, if it were possible, but you could not alter my opinion."

"I assure you, Sir, Lady Flasherton ——"

"May go to the devil, madam. I beg your pardon; I know it is not polite to name the prime minister of fashionable society in the presence of his votaries; but I am rude as unpolished steel — a Liverpool trader, nothing more; and, therefore, that I may be perfectly understood, I repeat, that you, madam, are a mere woman of the world, anxi-

ous, by your connexion with this or any other family, to do one or both of two things:—first of all to get a husband; secondly, to make money, or to secure both in one, if you could get a rich fool to lead you to the altar."

"Sir!" said Miss Maxwell, rising, "I do not understand you."

"Not quite yet; but do me the favour to resume your seat, and your understanding will become enlightened in a few minutes. I cannot, madam, aid you in your aim after happiness, but I can in your search after wealth. It *may* be, that in six months' time, the family you now reside with will not be worth sixpence!"

"Merciful Heaven!" she exclaimed, her natural selfishness bursting forth in all its deformity; "then what would become of me!"

"Exactly so," said Horace Brown. "What, indeed, would become of you! You would find it difficult to meet with other ladies who employ only those you recommend; the per-centage paid you by the different trades-people is a pretty fortune in itself: but I am

not going to expose this, at least not at present; it is one amongst many curious facts, which less than a week's residence in London has furnished me with. Now, Miss Maxwell, you perceive that *I know you;* one moment more, and you will *know me.*" As Horace spoke, he drew a well-filled purse from his pocket—"Self-interest, madam, blinds some persons, and enlightens others; it is an excellent linguist, for it comprehends all languages—it calls virtues and vices into action, teaching us to keep at least the appearance of virtue to ourselves, and to suffer our friends to appropriate the vices, when they are no longer needed for our own advantage. It is always accused of our crimes; yet in common honesty, I must own that it is the source of many of our perfections. Permit me, madam, to lay the sacrifice I now make to self-interest at your feet; in return, I desire that my niece may be left alone to my guidance: you, so fertile in invention, can always excuse her being so to her mother, who, I know, dreads my influence over her daughter; it is also necessary that I am informed of any and all who address Miss Brown."

"Lorton!" added Miss Maxwell, obsequiously.

"In the way of marriage," continued Uncle Horace. "What she knows herself, will be known to me without your interference; but *she does not* know all that transpires here."

Mr. Brown thought Miss Maxwell grew paler than usual; but he was not certain.

"But, Sir—Mr. Brown," said she, grasping in her hand the purse he had placed upon her lap, "would this be honourable?"

"*Have you weighed that purse?*" inquired Uncle Horace, coolly.

Mechanically did Maxwell lift it up, and mechanically did she smile.

"All that transpires in this house?" repeated Miss Maxwell, peering through the netting.

"All, without colouring or reserve."

"But, Sir, ——"

"Woman!" said Horace sternly, "count the gold. If your information be worth more, you shall have more. *You can be bought,* I know full well; and, harkye, if any out-bid

the Liverpool trader, let me know. I have found the philosopher's stone."

Miss Maxwell stared with astonishment, not quite certain that he was in his senses.

"It consists in the mingling of industry and carefulness, and turns, what it works upon, to brilliant gold. Good morning, Miss Maxwell. I need not bid you to remember self-interest;" and he laughed scornfully while speaking. "Nor—ah! ah! ah!—tell you, after what has passed between us, how perfectly useless it will be, to waste your blandishments and sweetness upon Horace Brown!"

CHAPTER VIII.

The gaudy gloss of fortune only strikes
The vulgar eye; the suffrage of the wise,
The praise that's worth ambition, is attain'd
By sense alone, and dignity of mind.

ARMSTRONG.

"AND so your mother is ill, Mary," said Horace to his niece, as the phaeton turned into Hyde Park.

"Indeed, uncle, she is any thing but well. I cannot make out what is the matter with her:—her temper is so uncertain."

"Pooh! is she not a woman?"

"She is so nervous."

"Pooh! she would be considered fashionable!"

"She has lost her colour."

"Mere want of rouge!"

Mary turned round and laid her hand on her uncle's arm—her eyes were filled with tears.

"Well," said Uncle Horace, "I will not

vex you, Mary; if your mother is really indisposed, send for a doctor — though, God knows, I never put faith in their skill; but by all means send for a doctor. Where's your father?"

"Gone to see some turtle just arrived in the London Docks."

"There, Mary, a gentleman is bowing to you."

Mary returned the salute. And a florid, showy, good-natured-looking man cantered to the side of their carriage. He was precisely one of the sort of men whom nature moulded into beauty, and then left; thinking any other endowment unnecessary. His head was rather empty, yet he *was* a gentleman—that never could be questioned for a moment—but the first sentence he spoke, together with his manner of speaking it, convinced you he was not an *English* one. Major Blaney had always moved in good society—had not the least vestige of *brogue* clinging like a bur to his ordinary conversation—had travelled and fought, sung and danced to ad-

miration; and yet had never been able to acquire that high-bred *repose,* which is the distinguishing characteristic of an English gentleman. He tried for it, however — and spoiled his natural energy by endeavouring to wrap it in the cast-off cloak of the last English aristocrat with whom he had dined or exchanged civilities; but he could not succeed. He would have given half the income he (like other Irishmen) *ought* to have possessed, to have been born in England. Lady Ellen Revis, who discovered in him an apostacy, which I grieve to say all Irishmen away from their country are too apt to manifest—always called him Major *O'Blaney,* invariably apologizing afterwards for using the O, and finishing her pretty excuse by saying it occurred to her that the distinguishing O should be appended to the name of every Irishman in the world.

Mary introduced her uncle to the officer, and could not help thinking that Uncle Horace—the expression of whose countenance was sufficiently severe to gratify the greatest stickler

for the native dignity of the Lords of the creation—she, I say, could not help thinking that her uncle had more of the high-bred gentility of repose about him than the gallant Major, who complimented and smiled; and informing Mr. Brown that he was to have the honour of meeting him that day at dinner, as he was to dine with Mr. Lorton, flung a rose at Mary's feet, and continued his ride.

"How a short nose disfigures a man's countenance!" said Horace Brown, bending his thin body to look after the horseman, and then devoting to the enjoyment of his own long one, an exceedingly large pinch of snuff. "But by Vulcan! here are three bowers together," he continued. "I wish to Heaven we were out of this infernal place! Is there no place where you can take a drive, child, without being bobbed at, like a cherry on a stick?"

Mary laughed at her uncle's homely simile; and his temper was not softened when one of the three passing close to the carriage, addressed Mary in French. His choler rose, when she presented him to her uncle, as the

Count de Muskito, who immediately addressed a superabundance of compliments to the worthy trader. Lucky was it for all parties that they were soon separated by the crowd of carriages which clustered near Kensington Gardens. Many lovely faces glanced at Mary as she passed; but her eye was restless, and her cheek flushed.

"I wish," said she, "that Maxy had been with us. She is acquainted with everybody, and takes so much trouble off my hands. I forget half the people, and do not know exactly who to bow to. Mamma remembers every one, but I become nervous and confused."

"We will get out here," said her uncle; "a walk, child, will do you good."

The ponies were drawn up, and Uncle Horace was about to descend, when Mary exclaimed suddenly—"Oh, no! not here; do not let us get down here: let us go another round, or home—let us go home."

Mr. Brown was about to exclaim in his usual strain against the fickleness of woman-

kind; but he looked on Mary's now pallid cheek, and remained silent.

"Then wait here for me, Mary, for five minutes; I see Harry Mortimer walking in at that gate with two ladies—his fine aunt and cousin, I suppose. I want to know the reason of his not calling; and I will know it too; if you both chose to quarrel, and make fools of yourselves, that's no reason he should forget what is due to one who was his friend, when he had no other."

"Uncle, he did call;—do not go—indeed, he called twice yesterday."

"And would not your father see him? Why he told me he intended asking him and his uncle to dinner to-day!"

"Papa, I believe, did not know he called."

"And you, Mary, did you refuse to receive an old friend like Harry?"

"He called with Lady Ellen," murmured Mary, hardly knowing what she said.

"With Lady Ellen!" repeated her uncle: "With Lady Ellen! whose wit and beauty, and I know not what beside, has formed the

theme of all your letters, and who was to be your friend till death! Mary," added Horace, —stepping down to pursue his intended plan, and as he spoke he advanced his head close to the very pretty white crape bonnet that shaded the young lady's face,—"Mary, take care you are not jealous!"

He was soon out of sight, and Miss Lorton doubled her veil over her face, and desired the fairy postilion, who guided her pónies, to draw up in the least exposed part of the drive, and await her uncle's return.

Her face, her whole frame, was quivering from agitation, for the warning recurred to her —sounded in her ear—rung upon her heart— "Was she jealous?" Did her uncle imagine her guilty of such meanness? If he did, what must others do? What must Harry Mortimer think? What would Lady Ellen, the high-minded Lady Ellen Revis, think of her! Bitterly did she reproach herself for her want of energy. "I must seem a poor, weak, degraded creature in the eyes of Lady Ellen!— in his eyes also! And he will think that I

love him—love him so dearly that I cannot bear to see him in company with her he loves!" Then she regretted she had not gone into the gardens at once with her uncle. "Better I had met them there!—Fool that I was to imagine I could live on in London without meeting them constantly." And then poor Mary with a beating heart, and eyes throbbing to her temples, resolved to be a heroine! In her simplicity she ran over, with the rapid glance of a young and vigorous mind, the dilemmas of all whom she had ever heard of as similarly circumstanced; but no case, she thought, was half as trying as her own. If Lady Ellen's character had afforded the least grounds for anything short of perfect admiration, it would have been comforting; for self-love never fails to extract a delicious balm from the faults and follies of friends. We frequently imagine it is our affection which prompts us to correct their foibles: this is generally a mistake; in nine cases out of every ten, we play monitor to show our superiority: all this, the better part

of the community do with the most perfect unconsciousness, and without any knowledge of the motive which prompts their actions. And when dear Mary glanced over the fair title page of Lady Ellen's character, I am not quite sure that she did not sigh at its clearness and its beauty. Envy, however, is so dastardly a quality, that no one ever yet pleaded guilty of it; and I believe Mary Lorton had less than any other beauty in London, who was entering her nineteenth year. Finding in the sweet storehouse of her memory no case parallel with her own, what did she do? She thought a few thoughts of prayer, that God would direct and strengthen her to behave with the dignity and propriety which are ever the eldest and twin-born of true Religion. Oh! that the young did but know the value of such supplications — the value of the few words uttered by the soul to Him who reads the soul's feelings as if they were written in a book! Never was such petition sent up to the throne of God without receiving a guiding and consoling answer. She had not

breathed her prayer, she had only *felt* it,—when she saw her obstinate uncle coming towards her, accompanied by the party he had gone in search of,—Lady Ellen leaning on Uncle Horace, and the stately Lady Norley, smiling graciously upon the once discarded Harry Mortimer. On they came; and now thought Mary—"I will not disgrace myself." She received Lady Ellen—she thought as usual—but Ellen felt that the reception was different. She extended her hand to her old companion, and a peculiar look from her uncle rewarded her at once. It was the first time in her young life she had ever felt the necessity of triumphing over self; and though as they drove homeward her heart did beat, and her eyes did fill with tears, yet she felt proud of her triumph, and more at peace with herself.

And what, it will be asked, did the town say of Harry Mortimer?

"Blaney," inquired a regular lounger at one of the clubs, "can you tell me —a—a—*why* Lord Norley chooses to bring this unheard-of nephew of his to London? When his

last son died we were all speculating on Lady Ellen as a splendid heiress; and as it is, I suppose she will have the personals, real and funded. Yet ——"

"You think this young Mortimer devilishly in the way," said Blaney.

"Exactly!" replied Lounger number one, of the three who seemed of the same genus.

Blaney was doing what an Irishman, or indeed any man, never fails to do when he has an opportunity; he was standing with his back to the fire-place, opposite one of those multipliers of beauty and its reverse, called looking-glasses; and arranging his moustaches in the most military manner—"You think him devilishly in the way?" he again inquired carelessly.

"I do—a—a—don't you?" The lounger, be it remembered, always spoke with a peculiar indecision of manner.

"I can't say I do—I can't exactly say I ever found any man particularly in my way."

"Well done, Blaney!" exclaimed lounger

number two; "that *is* Irish modesty, I suppose."

Blaney frowned, and few men cared to make Blaney frown twice.

"I say, Blaney, don't you think really now —a—a—that Norley could have done without this nephew?" inquired lounger number three.

"I dare say he *could*," replied the handsome Major; "but I don't see why he *should* —he's his own flesh and blood." (Lounger number two thought *that* both an Irish phrase and an Irish feeling; but he remembered the frown, and did not care to say so.) "There's the title, you know," continued the Major. "His Lordship too is suspected of a certain little well-bred parsimony, which it is only polite to term 'prudence;' and I hear does not deem it unholy for cousins to marry."

"The devil!" exclaimed lounger number one. "And he will like, perhaps, to keep the money in the family:—then, you remember, his eldest son was Member for his county; Cleveland was too young, poor fellow! even if

he had lived, to succeed him—younger than Lady Ellen by five years; and I hear that his Lordship has got Mortimer in training already to represent the 'independent interest,' where, of course, no one dares oppose his nominee. But a son-in-law could stand for the county as well as a nephew—a—a—could he not?"

"It won't do," said Blaney, laughing. "You never had, you never will have a chance of Lady Ellen."

"I don't care," replied the coxcomb. "I could have passed over her deformity; but I hear she is clever—horrid!—think of a *clever* wife!"

"Who would know more than yourself," said the Major, quietly.

"Exactly!—quite detestable!"

"And understands Latin."

"You don't really mean to say the woman understands Latin!" said the horrified dandy. Good God! what an escape I have had!" then after a pause continued—"But, my dear fellow, I hear that this Harry Mortimer has been

totally uneducated—brought up somewhere in—a—a— place called Liverpool, where they make—a— a—steamers—and palm oil—and snuffers—by some trading man—a—a—Mr. Brown."

"I believe he was adopted, or something of the sort, on the death of his mother, with whom Lord Norley had quarrelled, by an elder brother of Brown Lorton's, whose dinners you pronounce unexceptionable; and who is worth—I cannot tell how much. As to his being uneducated, I think him, without any exception, one of the most gentlemanly fellows I ever met with, and the ladies have already pronounced him splendid!"

Blaney, be it observed, *felt* how much he himself was admired, and consequently could afford to speak the truth, even of a gentleman.

"The devil!" interrupted the exquisite.

"Then he will be going every where—how very disagreeable!—really, one is elbowed in the rudest manner.—At Brookes's and Crockford's—it is quite—a—a—horrid, and to—a—a—gentleman, painful in the extreme! I

cannot think but it is improper in the utmost degree in Lord Norley to present such a person; he ought to be called to account."

"For introducing his own nephew into society!" said the Major.

"A—a—I forgot that he was his nephew—a—a—shocking—quite!"

"What is shocking?" inquired Major Blaney, who, though as far as possible from what is considered 'intelligent,' had a sufficient quantity of brains to be amused at the vacuity of the lounger's understanding.

"Oh! to be his nephew, you know—a—a—brought up—in that manner—a—a—Member for the county—a—a—married to Lady Ellen—concentrating the landed interest—and Latin—a—a—and—a—a—the funded property too—all that Lady Ellen might have had—all to the Liverpool trader."

"By Jove, man!" exclaimed Blaney, half angry with the puppy, "have I not told you that Harry Mortimer is his nephew?"

The youth made no reply, but extracting himself with the utmost care and skill from

the *fauteuil* in which he had been entombed during this faithfully recorded conversation, he addressed three syllables to the second lounger, simply, "Shall we—a—go?" who motioned to the third, and they managed to glide out of the room silently and gracefully.

"There they go," muttered Blaney, "and well has Lady Ellen named them—the three degrees of comparison—foolish!—foolisher!—foolishest!—Marry Lady Ellen, indeed! The next thing, I suppose, will be to marry Mary Lorton."

CHAPTER IX.

What other art remains untried
This load of anguish to remove,
And heal the cruel wounds of love?
To friendship's sacred force apply;
That source of tenderness and joy;
A joy no anxious fears profane,
A tenderness that feels no pain:
Friendship shall all these ills appease,
And give the tortur'd mourner ease.

HAMILTON.

A HERO is supposed to deserve peculiar attention at a lady's hand; and yet I do not know how it is, but I take far more pleasure in recording the actions, and developing the character of my heroines. I love my own sex—I would rather, ten to one, repeat the conversations of Lady Ellen—of Mary Lorton—or even chronicle the occasion of Magdalene's tears, than describe the feelings of Harry Mortimer—the speculations, political and matrimonial, of his uncle on his behalf—trace the weak ambition of Brown Lorton—the simplicity and

shrewdness of Peter Pike—or the strength and terseness of Horace; but, no; I confess a partiality for Horace—dear Uncle Horace! whose precepts and example are both good; who trades, without being a trader; who delights in benevolence; and whose roughness is only a sort of apology to himself for loving humanity all too well. Yes, I confess a partiality for Uncle Horace, far beyond that I feel for any of the male sex who have hitherto appeared upon these pages; but my lady friends would never forgive me, if I did not mention some of the qualities which impressed themselves upon Mary's memory in favour of Harry Mortimer.

Major Blaney has announced that he was handsome and gentlemanlike.

"Handsome and gentlemanlike!" Ladies, I appeal to you:—Do you think it necessary that Mary Lorton need give any further reason for a preference, so natural when shut up with this "handsome and gentlemanlike" youth—no, not shut up, but created while wandering together through a certain green

copse that skirted Uncle Horace's garden; cultivating the same flowers—feeding the same birds—singing the same songs—reading the same books—loving the same things—until each reflected the thoughts and feelings of the other; until, indeed, loving the same pure, natural, and beautiful wonders of the creation, produced a love as natural, as beautiful, and as pure.

Now, Mary — if asked before the "trifle light as air" had "moved" dissension between her and him—would never have thought of his being "gentlemanlike:—" she would have said he was — "Oh, so kind!" — "Oh, so generous!"—"Oh, so noble!"—and, perhaps, (this would have been in an under tone)—"*Oh, so handsome!*" A delicately minded girl will never avow that she prefers a man because of his beauty, which she only acknowledges as an incidental advantage; she will deny its fascination to herself, and create for him most amiable and excellent qualities—such qualities taking their tone from her own mind;—she will enwreath him with

perfections!—she will become an alchymist and crystallize him at once!—And the marrying part of mankind ought to be most thankful that such is the endearing weakness of woman; for if she did not create these perfections, what would become of the perfectionless beings who congregate like summer flies on the inside and the outside of our dwellings, with as little motive, and, for ought I ever could discover, to as little purpose!

Will Mary's description satisfy? Not quite. Well, then, his eyes blue; his teeth, you may suppose them white, but from the firm and peculiar formation of his mouth, they were but little seen; never, indeed, except when he laughed, and his laugh was music. His eye, in general, would have been called "cold." Mary never thought it so; and, unhappily, another lady existed who entertained the same opinion. But there was about Harry a carefulness—a watching both of himself and others—far beyond his years; the result of early trials and disappointments. He had never forgotten the reception Lord Norley had given

him, when his two sons sat in health and vigour at his board, and when it was likely that he would have been but an incumbrance to his house; and he would have been basely ungrateful, if he had forgotten the attention—the sisterly affection lavished upon him by his cousin Ellen. He had one other quality, which I love to think of—to bless! laud him for it, ye who read its record!—a true and independent spirit!—*this* made him quit the dwelling where luxury might have tempted a youth of eighteen to sit on the lowest seat, and wait my lord's pleasure for a higher—*this* made him toil in the office of Horace Brown, at a labour he could not comprehend, and which his soul abhorred; yet, when almost unconsciously he wasted paper and destroyed pens, the half smile half frown of his benefactor and friend never possessed a tithe of the severity which the reproaches of his own conscience visited upon him for time mis-spent.

Independence is never without pride; though pride, improperly so called, is to be met with

without independence. Harry's pride prevented his asking Mary the reason of her change. The modern Moloch, too, rose to his imagination. She was rich—he was poor: and he so thoroughly loathed the remembrance of his uncle's harshness, that he could not bear to speak or think of all he suffered there; nor did he wish that any eye but his own should see his cousin's letters. And they were no longer boy and girl. When she went to London, he laboured unceasingly; that is to say, he really sat in the counting-house from morning till night, and destroyed less paper and fewer pens than ever he had done before. He was half tempted to refuse Lord Norley's offer; and he would have done so, but for one simple passage in his uncle's letter:—

"I have now no son, unless my sister's child will be as one to me in my bereavement."

Then Lady Ellen:—

"Harry, will you refuse to be my brother?"

How mad the world would have imagined Mortimer for even pausing to consider such an offer!—I loved him for it!

"I wish you," said Lord Norley to this new heir of his affections—heir to his speculations rather,—"I wish you to appear exactly as my sons would have appeared, and have set apart nearly the same sum for that object; I say *nearly*, because the habits you must have acquired will doubtless enable you to make a greater show, with a smaller expenditure, than other young men would require for the same purposes."

"I feel your kindness, my Lord; and have no doubt that what you design for me will exceed my wants," replied Mortimer; "but I shall not be able to *appear* to spend more than I really spend. I have never been extravagant, yet never sought to make a guinea seem two."

Lord Norley made no comment on this specimen of honest feeling, though it did occur to him that he might not find his nephew so docile as he expected. He continued:—"I intend to call on your friend, Mr. Horace Brown, to-day." He paused, expecting Harry to make some observation on his Lordship's

condescension. Harry, however, continued silent. "If you are not otherwise engaged, you can ride with me; it would prevent his feeling awkward or embarrassed; and he has been so kind to you, that you should consider his feelings."

Harry had his own reasons for not wishing to call at Mr. Brown Lorton's with his uncle. But he could hardly help smiling at the idea of any one confusing the worthy merchant. He parried the invitation, and assured him at the same time, that his friend, if he pleased, could command the best society in the county; and that he was altogether a superior man to his brother.

"One meets these *parvenus* every where," said his Lordship; "yet Brown Lorton has an excellent judgment—a very excellent judgment—in dinners—and the daughter is lovely, quite lovely. It is a pity so sweet a girl should be a *parvenue!*"

Poor Lord Norley! how would he have looked if some English Asmodeus had just tapped him on the shoulder, and reminded him

that the grade above his conceited self looked down upon *him* as a *parvenu*, with as much contempt as he looked down upon Brown Lorton?

This puts me in mind of a fable:—

"I thank Jupiter!" said the sparrow, "that I am not a diminutive bird like the wren, to be made the sport of every school-boy, and the simile of all that is *petite* and contemptible! I thank Jupiter I am not a *little* wren!"

"How I pity that miserable sparrow!" quoth a thrush, as, pluming his brown wing, he gave loose to his conceit in song. "How I pity that poor sparrow! If I were no *bigger* than he is, I would never show my bill beyond the eaves of the cottage which concealed my nest!"

"My neighbour thrush thinks a great deal of himself," whispered a blackbird to his lady wife, as she sat patiently upon her eggs; "but what a *small* creature it is! so ragged and starved in his appearance;—it would be his wisest plan to roost in the holly bush all day, instead of fluttering as if *he* were a bird of

magnitude." And the blackbird stretched his neck, and gave a whistle of triumph which attracted the attention of a well-powdered jackdaw, as he balanced himself with a careless, foppish air, first on one leg, and then on the other, on the pinnacle of a chimney :—

"That poor *little* bird," cawed Master Jack, in soliloquy, "tries to make himself *heard,* though it is almost impossible he can be *seen ;* he is so dark too, as well as small; no tint to relieve the black. Well! it really is astonishing how insignificant some people look;" and he pirouetted in the sun beams, delighted to see how large his shadow appeared upon the grey roof where he had established a residence.

"Well! what will the world come to!" exclaimed an old rook to a still older eagle, who was reposing on the battlement of a neighbouring tower.

"What's the matter now, gossip?" quoth the eagle, withdrawing his gaze from the sun.

"Haven't you heard the clatter?" replied the rook.

"No," said the eagle; "my ears were filled with the music of the spheres — with remembrance of the harmony which I heard through the gates of heaven, when last I soared into the sky."

"Then you did not hear what the jackdaw said!" chattered the rook.

"Not I!" replied the eagle.

"The poor caricature of the genus *corvus!*" persisted the learned bird: "the diminutive jackdaw has been ridiculing the blackbird because of his size! If *I* did that, indeed, it would be no wonder—I, a well-proportioned bird!"

"You!" exclaimed the eagle.

"Yes; me, to be sure!" replied the rook, with more temper than he ought to have shown in so august a presence. "Does not your majesty perceive a vast difference between a rook and a jackdaw?"

"Not I, indeed!" quoth the eagle, as he spread his wings: "*Not I, indeed!* in my eyes you are all the same."

CHAPTER X.

To eat to live—to live to eat!

Pro and Con.

The dinner at Brown Lorton's passed, as all professed eating dinners do, when no great wits are present, and where the quantity of good things *consumed* far surpasses the quantity of good things *said*. I believe all the fashionable novels that have been presented to the "reading public" during the last ten years, have given minute descriptions of these affairs; consequently, any details of mine would be superfluous; moreover, I confess my ignorance of them; I should not be able to do Brown Lorton's "first-rate dinners" justice. I have no talent for them; and unless they are *served* with taste and elegance, and garnished with rare company, they are, to me,

hot, stupid, and disagreeable: it is only the lights, the splendour of the plate, and the perfume and beauty of the dessert that makes them endurable. Eating is an unpleasant task—a sort of animal necessity—a tribute which the clay exacts from the spirit—a daily record of our wants—a hint from mortality as to the base matter we consist of.

The only thing I remember of the particular dinner I am called upon to notice is, that Lord Norley was first piqued, and then rather pleased, at the ease and dignified confidence of Horace Brown, from whom he extracted (his Lordship was a man of the world) a sufficient quantity of information touching the manufacturing districts, to create a considerable sensation in the House of Peers next night. Horace had his own manners his own opinions, his own ideas; he felt that as an English merchant he was necessary to the existence of the greatest kingdom in the world, and he was proud of it. Such a man cannot fail of being respected in society. Even Harry Mortimer was delighted to see

how he was at once appreciated; the occasional sarcasms, the *cayenne* with which he flavoured his discourse, gave a zest to the conversation at Brown Lorton's, which it had never possessed before. Brown Lorton, who had been sitting in trembling fear of his brother's *brusquerie* during the early part of the first grand dinner at which he had been present, and who never, at his own table, had sufficient courage to call his opinions his own, grew astonished at his brother's moral boldness. Poor Lorton was so anxious to secure the favour of his titled guests, that he forgot himself, and became as firmly manacled a slave as ever rowed in a Venetian galley!

The ladies did not appear at this "feast of eating and flow of wine." The mistress of the mansion was shut into her bed-room; not with her daughter, but with Miss Maxwell:—and Mary was alone—did I say alone?—No: she was not alone in her silent and sacred chamber, for she had books—several—heaped on a low table near the window; and she sat, her feet upon a yellow ottoman, her arms rest-

ing on the cushions of a luxurious chair, while she bent over a volume, a small volume of poetry — Mrs. Hemans' "National Lyrics!" What a blessed thing is poetry!—how much of all that is best, and dearest, and holiest, shines forth from a page—a stanza—a single line! Prose, heavy prose, toils after it in vain. It is the spirit, the essence of literature. She turned over and over the leaves; now half warbling the songs—the music for which she had learnt, then imagining a wild music of her own to some Spanish war hymn, or some soft evening chant which angels inspired, and angels might stoop to hear.

Mary hardly knew how it was, but a few days had brought much wisdom to her store of thoughts. It is a beautiful thing, that by reading our own heart, we learn to read the hearts of others. Books are but feeble records of humanity: — those who would be greatly wise must read *itself*. The study was new to Mary Lorton; she may be said to have only achieved the A, B, C of moral literature; but that, in so young, so rich, so fair a maid, was

something. The motto to one of the poems rivetted her attention. She read it twice:—

> "They sin who tell us Love can die,
> With life all other passions fly;
> All others are but vanity!
> In heaven Ambition cannot dwell,
> Nor Avarice in the vaults of hell.—
> Earthly these passions, as of earth,—
> They perish where they drew their birth.
> But Love is indestructible!
> Its holy flame for ever burneth—
> From heaven it came—to heaven returneth."

These lines of Southey's were prefixed to one of the "Songs of a Guardian Spirit," that breathe of the holy perfume in which all things SHE wrote were steeped; while Mary pondered o'er the page, she blessed the poet. Let us, too, pause to bless her memory, though she is gone from among us, to be no more seen, no more heard!—Gone, in the prime of womanhood, to the grave—the cold, damp, narrow grave!—gone for ever from a world that hardly valued her as she deserved! Her harp hangs upon the willows!—her voice is silent!—her pen is dry! No longer will she touch the occurrences of life with a "golden

finger," and transmute them into poetry. Her mind was one vast imagination; her heart, the temple of tenderness. She was of all others the poet of the affections; not of the gross and sensual feelings which are so called, but of the affections that are breathed by the Creator into our souls! I cannot think of her life, her death, without heavy and settled grief. Many a page of her Lyrics was marked by Mary's tears; and well it was that her naturally pure taste directed her to such a holy fountain of enjoyment, for neither her mother nor Miss Maxwell cared what she read. Lady Ellen, indeed, lent her books; but Lady Ellen delighted more in high and lofty romance, or in the keen encounter of men's wits.

While Mary was reading, she received a note from her friend; it was as follows:—

"Perhaps, dearest Mary, I ought not to write you—perhaps, I ought not again to visit you. I said I would not, after your strange coldness to me the other night; but this morning you were almost yourself again. Tell me *why* you

were so cold? or tell Harry, when you see him this evening (for I am sure he *will* see you), and come to me to-morrow, and bring "Uncle Horace" with you; and let me know if he is disengaged, for I intend to lay violent siege to his heart. Dear Harry tells us so much of his excellence, that I quite love him for it."

Mary paused, and her breath came thickly to her lips. She looked on the note to continue; but there was nothing more! Mary thought it finished abruptly with—

"Yours ever affectionately,

"Ellen Revis."

She turned the note over and over, twisted it, tortured the poor paper into a double knot —forgot her book!—suffered Bright to rest his shaggy paws upon the delicate blue silk which Major Blaney had declared on a former occasion was a dress fit for an angel, and, of course, almost worthy of Miss Lorton;—heeded nothing—saw nothing, until roused from her reverie (during which she was perfectly un-

conscious that twilight was softening the brilliancy of day into a scarcely less brilliant night), by a well-known voice. She saw Uncle Horace and Harry Mortimer within her sanctum.

"I almost thought," said her uncle, without noticing an agitation which even the twilight could not conceal, "that you would have been in your mother's room; and I wanted Harry to see the Canova, which by the way he cannot do without lights."

"Shall I ring for them?" said Mary, "or may I trouble you to show it?"

"Which do *you* mean, Mary?" inquired her provoking relative.

"Either," she replied, coldly.

"I assure you, Miss Lorton," said Mortimer, "I would not have intruded here, had not your uncle insisted upon it; he told me ——"

"Make no apology, I request of you," interrupted the young lady. "I am always glad to see my uncle's friends, and my old acquaintances."

"How delighted that poor dog is to see

you!" exclaimed Mr. Brown, as, after a long and awkward pause, her favourite maid entered, and lit the tapers.

"Poor Bright! we were fellow travellers," said Harry, patting his rough coat.

"Now look at the Magdalen!—is it not beautiful? Who would ever imagine a foreigner could have so fine an idea of female beauty!" said Horace, all his prejudice roused at the idea of any but an Englishman accomplishing aught that was excellent.

"My dear uncle!" exclaimed Mary, "you are worse than ever! Surely all our rarest models of beauty, our choicest specimens of art, come from abroad!"

"Models of beauty!—stuff! Specimens of *art*—granted. Yes; our *best* specimens of *art* come from abroad—an artful, pick-pocketing set! Art! why where should it come from, but from abroad! I really am ashamed of you, Mary, to admire anything un-English."

"Then why do you admire *that?*" inquired Mary.

"Oh! it is very beautiful—holy and beau-

tiful! Fit for a church, *if it* had not been carved by an Italian and a Catholic!"

"And yet," said Mary, "so small a cast can give you but a faint idea of the original. Many, and particularly Magdalene, have described to me its surpassing composure and dignity."

"Magdalene! why where did Magdalene see it?" inquired Uncle Horace, who would as soon have sent a servant on a voyage of discovery to the moon, as one inch out of England.

"Abroad!"

"So you have been abroad!" said Horace Brown; a slight idea that Magdalene must be unworthy of the situation she held crossing his mind, in spite of his good-nature.

"Yes, Sir," replied the girl.

"Have you been in many countries?"

"Not many, Sir."

"Where?"

"In Italy; and remained a little time at Naples, at Florence, and at Rome."

If Magdalene had not seemed a superior

person, Horace would have felt to ascertain if his pockets were safe; but he looked into her face, which had rather more colour than usual, and thought her beautiful.

"How came you to travel? Were you in service then?"

"No, Sir; I travelled with two younger brothers—twins. My mother, on her death-bed, made me promise never to leave them if they journeyed out of England. She could not bear them to go abroad."

"A sensible woman—a very sensible woman!" exclaimed Horace, ready to confer the diploma of sound judgment upon every one who thought as he thought. "But where," he added, "are they now?"

"One," replied Magdalene, "is buried in the Protestant burying-ground at Rome, in a grave without a name, shaded by the projection of an ancient wall-tower, and by this time covered with the grass and flowers of Italy." As she spoke, her voice trembled with emotion, and tears rushed to her eyes.

"Poor fellow!" exclaimed Horace, "to die

in a strange country—away from England—no name upon his grave either."

"It will have a name, Sir," said Magdalene, "one of these days."

"Your other brother?"

"Is in England, Sir."

During this short dialogue Mary had exchanged a few words with Harry, but in so low a tone that Uncle Horace heard them not; they were evidently not disagreeable to her ear,—not painful at all events, for she blushed deeply while he spoke. Harry turned round as Uncle Horace was wondering how a servant, a *London* servant, could express herself so well, and afford to travel with her brothers, and said, "We had an adventure, yesterday, —an adventure, Sir, so much after your own heart, that I wished you had shared it."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Horace. "Pray tell me what it was."

"Lady Ellen and I had been wiling away the morning in the Regent's Park, and turned into the Colosseum. We passed from one subject to another in the saloon, until her atten-

tion was attracted by a very spirited figure in plaster—a Brigand's wife clinging to a rock, supposed to be watching her husband's descent into the glen beneath. She bought it, and inquired the artist's address.

"'He lives in a place,' replied the attendant, 'where your ladyship would hardly go; if you desire, he will, of course, feel much honoured in waiting upon you.' But Lady Ellen would go; so she procured the direction; the man adding,—'It is such a miserable hole, that your ladyship will regret your visit.'

"'Do you think,' inquired my cousin, 'that the gentleman's feelings would be hurt at being discovered in such lodgings? because, if so, I will send for him.'

"The man laughed. 'Oh, dear, no, my Lady! of course, he will be too much honoured. He is not a gentleman, exactly; a youth—a mere youth. Clever; but I fear indolent, he does so little.' Lady Ellen said that he could not be expected to do a great deal, if all he did was so exquisite in quality. The man shrugged his shoulders, and we drove off."

"What was the artist's name?" inquired Uncle Horace.

"Philip Marsden," replied young Mortimer.

"By Vulcan, I am glad he is an Englishman!" was Uncle Horace's characteristic observation.

"In one of those lone, cold, shivering houses," continued Mortimer, "which stretch out into what once was a meadow, but having been half built upon, looks gloomy, and drear, and grassless even now; spotted with a half-naked child, or a few dirty, starved geese, mocking rusticity, and claiming alliance with the soil and misery of London paupers; —in one, or rather at the back of one of these cottages, we found the sculptor. The mistress of the place, astonished at our appearance, directed us with much civility across a filthy yard, at the bottom of which appeared, what I suppose was intended originally for a carpenter's shed. There was a long, low, narrow window close to the door, and, before Lady Ellen knocked for entrance, she paused to observe the artist through its dim panes. As

he stood with his back to us, it was impossible not to observe the ease and grace of his willowy figure. A tunic of grey cloth was girded round his waist by a black leather belt; and a small cap, of the same material, sat lightly upon long and clustering curls.

"I hope," said Uncle Horace, "he is not a puppy."

"Before him, on an elevated table," continued Mortimer, "was a figure evidently intended as a companion to the one Lady Ellen had purchased—a Brigand leaning back, and looking upward, waving his hand in the air. It was partially covered with wet linen, but the attitude of the head, notwithstanding the smallness of the figure, was magnificent. At one side of this rude table stood an easel, around which were different portions of sculpture; and he had managed, with a couple of sticks, to form a sort of reading-desk to support some books. Apparently, the youth had been fatigued by exertion, and was seeking relaxation in change of employment, for he was reading, though a modelling tool re-

mained in his hand. The clay floor of the shed was heaped with the strange mis-shapen creations of a wild, but fertile and powerful imagination—a skeleton with extended arms supported a shroud-like drapery, in one corner, and in the other a straw pallet was but partially concealed by a tattered curtain."

Mary sighed.

"Go on," said Uncle Horace.

"There was a poverty in the aspect of the sculptor's dwelling that was painful to look upon; but it was the poverty of *circumstances*, not the poverty of genius."

"Right," interrupted Uncle Horace, "they are, indeed, distinct."

"'It is hardly fair,' whispered Ellen to me, 'to pry into such a scene.' She tapped at the door, however, and before he opened it he threw a ragged cloth over a delft plate, upon which rested a half-eaten crust of bread, and a broken vessel of water. He started when he opened the door, but Lady Ellen endeavoured to remove his embarrassment by saying how much she admired the Brigand's

wife—how much she desired a companion for it. I wish, dear Sir, you had witnessed the flush of an ambition, perhaps gratified for the first time, suffuse itself over the youth's features. I never saw a man with so pale a cheek, so white a brow; if it had not been for the bright and earnest look of his eagle eye, you might have imagined him a corpse. There was a loftiness in his address, tempered by modesty, which fascinated us both. And he showed Lady Ellen some models, that would do no disgrace to the glorious sculptors of Italy and Greece. If he lives he will be a great man; but——"

"Curse your 'buts;' really, Harry, you provoke me sometimes!" exclaimed Uncle Horace. "*What* is to prevent the young man's living? *what* is to prevent his being a great man? Is not his merit discovered; and when once a man's talent is known and appreciated in England, he must succeed!—*by Heaven, he shall succeed!*"

It escaped the warm-hearted man's notice as he thundered forth this declaration, that

Magdalene advanced, as though she would have fallen at his feet; but controlled the emotion —whatever it might have been that prompted so strange a movement—and retired to the place she had left.

"He looks so very worn:—his parents are both dead. The woman of the house said she believed he had no relation in the world; and yet, poor fellow! he is so energetic, so full of fire. It is quite beautiful to hear him talk of his art;—you would imagine he had the power of an emperor, and could call persons and actions into existence for its glory."

"You have seen him again, then?"

"Oh, yes! to-day: and Lady Norley is to have her bust done; and Mary should have seen how delicately her friend Lady Ellen managed to bestow upon him a purse. The net-work, she said, as a *souvenir* from herself, the gold to purchase the marble, that was to be a present from her to her mother, which his skill would prevail on her to accept."

"God bless her!" said Uncle Horace.

And Mary was not at all displeased that Harry had called her Mary; and though quite as much perplexed as ever, Mary laid her head on her pillow that night, with a heart lightened of much of its sorrow.

I wonder what the few words were that Harry whispered to her in the twilight of that sweet room!

CHAPTER XI.

But grant, the virtues of a temp'rate prime
Bless with an age exempt from scorn or crime;
An age that melts with unperceived decay,
And glides in modest innocence away;
Whose peaceful day benevolence endears,
Whose night congratulating conscience cheers.

JOHNSON.

IT is true that Mary Lorton had more than once whispered to herself—"I wonder what brought dear Uncle Horace to London at this particular time!"—his farewell to her in his garden was yet green in her remembrance;—and he had given her but one hint that there was any peculiar motive for his visit. She knew perfectly well that as to London, he loved it not; that he entertained a mortal antipathy to the habits it engendered; that he looked upon her mother as a fool, and her father as little better: that he cherished a hope of seeing her wedded to his favourite Harry she fully understood; and she also saw clearly that his dislike to the "silken bands" did not ex-

tend to hers and Mortimer's establishment in the world.

Mr. and Mrs. Brown Lorton had, at one time, manifested a certain degree of interest for Harry Mortimer, not from an appreciation of his intrinsic merit, but because he was the nephew of a Peer! They would occasionally introduce him (while living near Liverpool) to anybody upon whom they wished to make an impression, "as Lord Norley's nephew;"—but when they ascertained that his lordship at the period to which I allude was not disposed "to do anything for the young man," their *good* opinion of him greatly diminished. It never entered into the simple comprehension of Mr. or Mrs. Brown Lorton to attribute an atom of blame to any member of the aristocracy; and both, therefore, came to the conclusion, that "the young man must have something wrong about him." About the same time a coolness, though from far different causes, grew up between Mary and Harry, and Mrs. Brown Lorton did all she could to increase it.

Mary knew that her uncle would never have

journeyed to London merely to see how young Mortimer "got on" with his grand relatives. One of his peculiarities—and a very extraordinary one it was—consisted in the fact, that as soon as anybody he loved, or was interested about, got beyond a difficulty, whether pecuniary or otherwise, so soon, *and not till then*, did he appear not to care any more about him.

Peter Pike once gave a perfect illustration of this feature in his master's character; and that without being at all conscious of his having ever illustrated anything in his life.

"You see," said he one day, "my master is, just as a body may say, the oddest gentleman in all England. There's no understanding him: and even *I* give it up. I used to try to make out what he was after, but it was no use; and we were always broiling together by consequence: so I thought it best to take his advice, which was,—'Peter Pike,' says he, 'I have three pieces of advice to give you, which you must attend to if you live with me. The first is,—do as you're bid; the second is,—do as you're bid; the third is,—do as you're

bid!' So I saw at last it was the only way to have peace. But now, I tell you, there's no understanding my master. Not far from our house there are a few huts scattered about, and belonging to them—for no one claimed her in particular—was a dog, and this dog was called Chance. Well, if a piece was cut out of all the ugly curs in Europe, an uglier beast could not be made than Chance: she'd the ears of a fox; the nose of a pig; the tail—but no, she had no tail, it was only a stump; the claws of a cat; the coat of a badger; the eyes of a ferret; the teeth of a tiger; the stomach of a greyhound; and a tongue as bitter and as long as a washerwoman's! Still, a few of the people at the huts liked the beast; it was a good watch, looked after the geese on the common, and had a wonderful instinct towards the children belonging to those who threw it a bone. I don't know how it was, but this nasty brute conceived a great hatred to my master, and he never could step outside his own gate that the creature would not be at his heels gnarling, and growling, and snapping;

and the cursing and swearing that passed between that dog and my master would tear the surplice off a minister's back,—it went beyond everything. My master would pelt him and kick him if he could; but Chance would be off like an arrow before he could touch her. This state of warfare lasted a good three months; every day the dog swearing at my master, and my master at the dog.

"At last winter came, and Chance had pups. Well, the snow was knee deep, but master was out, looking about covering some of Miss Mary's roses—and what should he see at the other side of the hedge but this nasty dog scratching and howling.

"'She'll be at me, now,' said the master to the gardener.

"'I think you could get a good throw at her, sir,' replied the gardener; 'for the boys have drowned her pups, and buried them in that mass of manure; and I think the heat has brought them to life again, for I hear them squalling through the heap.'

"Well, if you could only have heard the

froth master got into in a minute, and how he cursed our gardener—honest man!—as hard as ever he cursed Chance, for not taking the pups out of the heap; and bounced over the hedge, and with his own hands pulled out three living pups, and brought them and the mother into the kitchen, and got hot milk for her; and to be sure dogs *are* queer beasts, for she was gentle as a lamb then. So he kept them till he set them up, mother and sons. —Well—and I thought we were in for having the beasts always; but when she grew fat, *and out of her trouble, and well to do,* master cooled, and sent her back to the huts; *for that's one of the queer ways he has,*—to take to the miserable, and the sick, and the poor, and set them up, and then leave them when they are happy, and well, and rich."

This love for the needy, and carelessness towards the prosperous, Mary knew would have its influence with regard to Harry. More than once she was inclined to think that some danger or difficulty threatened her parents; for certainly Uncle Horace sneered at, and

quarrelled less with them than formerly : this, though it made her more positively happy, brought its counteracting anxiety,—for Uncle Horace ever kept his sweetest smiles for the unfortunate! She had certainly heard of tradespeople calling more than once, and she also knew that her father had complained of some city failure where some of his money had been lodged, affecting his pecuniary resources for a time. Still she felt assured in her own mind that something more was necessary to domicile her uncle in their dwelling, from whence he gave no token of departure; on the contrary, he manifested a desire to enter into society, where the reputation of his wealth, and his near connexion with the beautiful heiress, insured him at least a civil reception. In fact, his new habits and desires appeared greatly at variance with his old ones; and altogether he puzzled his fair niece not a little. Miss Maxwell, too—Miss Maxwell's grave face had grown more grave; instead of the honied words which formerly she poured upon Uncle Horace as thickly as the dew of

Hermon, she now appeared restless and uneasy in his presence, and under a constraint painful to witness, and which she in vain struggled to conceal. Mrs. Brown Lorton, ever since the party at Lady Norley's, had been the victim of a nervous irritability exceedingly foreign to her nature. Contrary to her usual habit, she refused to see her medical attendant; and Mary was growing really miserable at the progress of a disease which in a cheerful and animated temperament she thought exceedingly alarming. Her father appeared the only one who had not absolutely changed: for Magdalene, whom Mary had treated more as a humble friend than a mere servant, had learned to smile; and her kind mistress thought she perceived a slight, yet healthy colour tinting her pale cheek. Mary was one of those blessed-and-blessing beings who always find leisure, no matter what their own troubles may be, to think of the sorrows of others. It was to her a pleasure, which the selfish and worldly-minded cannot comprehend, to see the transient smile

illumine Magdalene's placid and lovely countenance, though her own heart was anything but at rest.

If Harry really did retain "a deep and affectionate remembrance" of their early days, if he had felt what he murmured, during the few moments that Uncle Horace addressed Magdalene, in the twilight that evening in her own "dear room," why had he not been there since? It is true she had refused to go to Lady Ellen the next day according to her invitation, but then Lady Ellen might have come to her: there was nothing to prevent it. She had been left for nearly two whole days to herself. Her mother still in her chamber,—"too nervous," she said, to permit even the daughter she so dearly loved to be near her, and yet constantly occupied with Miss Maxwell:—more than once Mary had paused at the door and heard sobbings!

Her father she never saw till after dinner, and then the quantity of good things he had been eating and drinking certainly rendered him no very interesting companion. Uncle Ho-

race was generally either out or closeted with Peter Pike, who, in his turn, appeared to have taken a rambling fit, and left the interesting Job Harris, the clacking Mrs. Claggett, and the other deities of the lower regions, to their employments, speculations, or amusements. Everyone had grown accustomed to Uncle Horace, Peter Pike, and Bright; and yet within a fortnight everything had changed in a most unaccountable manner,—the knocker was delicately muffled, and Mary's thousand and one admirers were obliged to pass along one side of the superb square and up another, without catching so much as a glimpse of the lady of their love. Perhaps the most startling event of that altered period was this. One night,—Saturday night, too,—Mary sat up waiting her uncle's return until past eleven, and still he came not! And where, most imaginative reader, do you suppose he was? Where, in your opinion, could the excellent proprietor of the most extensive stores in Liverpool have spent the intermediate hours between eight and twelve? I pray you exer-

cise your ingenuity. The month was June, —the evening, as I have said, Saturday. *At the Opera!* the sole inhabitant of Mrs. Brown Lorton's well-situated box! Now what think you of that? Poor Uncle Horace! he had not been long so domiciled when the door flew open, and a particularly well-dressed lounger entered, staid a few minutes, and disappeared. Another succeeded, stared at the worthy trader, and vanished. Presently Mr. Brown's voice called, as at an English theatre, "Box-keeper!"

"Sir," was the polite reply, accompanied by a bow which would not have disgraced the ballet.

"I thought this was a *private* box!"

"Most undoubtedly, sir."

"Then why do you suffer every lounger who pleases to enter it?"

"Unquestionably! I beg your pardon, sir, but I thought you were a member of Mrs. Brown Lorton's family."

"Well, sir—so I am, I suppose; but what of that?

"Why, sir, I assure you no one has entered except two gentlemen who have the regular entrée!"

"The what, sir?"

"Entrée, sir."

"Speak English, if you please, sir," growled Uncle Horace.

"Permission, sir, to go in and out as they please;" and then added, seeing how unsatisfied Uncle Horace looked, "friends, you perceive, sir, of Mrs. Brown Lorton's."

"And are there likely to be many more such *friends* here to-night?" inquired Horace, drawing his head back into the box as a snail draws in its horns.

"Really I can't say, sir; there are four standing together who will, I dare say, look in."

"Then, by George, sir, lock up the box, and swear you've lost the key," he exclaimed, banging to the door in a manner that made the carpeted lobbies echo again, and left the perplexed box-keeper in open-mouthed astonishment. Having thus arranged against far-

ther intrusion, he half enveloped himself in the silken curtain, and commenced peeping before and behind the identical pillar that was a source of so much annoyance to Miss Maxwell. More than once or twice did he congratulate himself on the precaution he had taken, for the box door was regularly besieged during the evening. What he thought of the opera it is not in my power to communicate; it was his first, and, to the best of my belief, his last visit. I crave your mercy, *Fanatico per Musica!* — I am not accountable for Uncle Horace's taste, or his deficiency thereof; I only record facts.

When he returned to Belgrave Square Mary had gone to bed; but patient Peter was seated in Mr. Brown's dressing-room at the table, his head resting upon his hands, while he indulged in a refreshing slumber. He was so sound asleep that he never heard his master enter; and Horace, seeing a book open close to his elbow, thought he would take note of the studies of his serving-man. Much did he hope it might be the "Whole Art of Service ex-

emplified, with Sundry Receipts never before published!" or "The Farrier's Assistant;" or even "The Kennel's Companion;"—for Peter's dress, on his first arrival in London, was a true type of his multitudinous and multifarious employments in Mr. Brown's establishment. But no! the unclosed book was none of these. It was a cheap publication, something after the fashion of an Annual, yet not an Annual; a sort of tail, a hanger-on, to those elegant and ephemeral books, the last ring of the tail, bound in blue calico, and lettered with silver; and the leaf was turned down on a piece of literary illumination, entitled, "How to make Love!" and was, moreover, illustrated by a pictorial effort of some unhappy artist's—a young man on his knees to a young lady, with one hand pressed upon his heart, the other carrying the fair one's hand to his lips!

This would have been too much for the philosophy of Uncle Horace, if his mind had not been preoccupied with more important matter than the subject of Peter's cogitations; as it was, he shook him rudely by the shoulder

and told him in good round terms that he was by many degrees a greater fool than he took him for—information which Master Pike received with his accustomed resignation, and prepared to mull some wine over the night-lamp, a beverage which Uncle Horace always took before he went to bed.

"Did you see *him*, sir?" inquired Peter respectfully.

"I did;—there, you always give me too much ginger."

"I will take care, sir. You do not think, now, sir, I was mistaken in his indentity?"

"No, I was perfectly satisfied: he is very much altered, but still singularly handsome!"

"He was, about twenty years ago, the handsomest man, for a *forriner*, I ever looked at!"

"The whole story is so strange, the information you obtained so extraordinary," observed Horace, "that I cannot even now make it out. I certainly thought, at first, you were mistaken; his returning at all to England was so unaccountable!"

"Augh!" said Peter (Peter always thus pre

faced what he considered a clever speech!) "Wherever the geese are the fox will come!"

"I wonder, Peter," inquired Uncle Horace, "what he has been doing during the last twenty —by the way, I do not think it can be twenty years."

"The Devil could tell if he would," quoth Peter, stirring in the sugar. "And it must be twenty years and some months, or more; for if you remember, it was a year after your brother brought home his wife—your honour remembers how fond he used to be before then of travelling for the firm, and leaving buggy and all, and going off to them French islands —Jersey, or some such name they call them. Many a time have I set him off in the buggy, and old Harris, Job's father, with him, as a sort of clerk and valet, and guard like, and his samples in the well of the buggy! I am sure you haven't forgot the day old Harris came home, and young master drove past the store an hour after in a po-chay and four, with such white favours!"

"The fool!" was Uncle Horace's short but emphatic exclamation.

"Well, sir, if you call to mind the great ball they gave in the great room, all in honour of the christening of the son that died. At that ball, for the first time, HE was seen in Liverpool; and you can tell, I dare say, how glad the young master was to see him, and made so much of him, and 'troduced him to every one as his wife's cousin; and I am sure that very evening she was taken in a *swoond,* and I lighted the way for your brother to carry her up stairs. How every body raved about her beauty! Miss Mary will never be as handsome as her mother."

"What do you know about beauty?" exclaimed Uncle Horace, to whom the comparison was really odious. "Mary is a thousand times more lovely. Peter, you're a blind fool."

"As your honour pleases," replied Peter, handing his master the negus; adding, "May I ask if he was alone?"

"No," replied Uncle Horace; "there were many to whom he spoke at the Opera, one man, a Count something, whom I have seen here;—he watched the box I was in very nar-

rowly, but I am quite satisfied that you were right."

"Ah, I couldn't be mistaken, sir!— the first thing attracted me to him at the Chequers in Liverpool, was his voice, which led me through the disguise, as I may say; and then his inquiries after your brother and his family, and then when I dogged him, as I may say, at the risk of my life, and overheard the conversation that passed between him and another outlandisher — first I thought they wanted to rob the house, but afterwards,—as I told you, sir—"

"Ay, Peter, ay; of course I was obliged to be near dear Mary."

"But do you know, sir since then I have been thinking, that—put that and that, and that, together, perhaps it is not Miss."

"Never mind, Peter, my head is so confused, so tortured, so bewildered, to-night—By Vulcan! I wonder how the women can ever sit four mortal hours in that house, listening to what English ears could never understand; it is a thousand times more noisy—than—"

"The great forge at our factory!" said Peter, helping his master to a simile while he put on his night-cap.

"Than all the forges in and out of Liverpool and Birmingham put together," replied Uncle Horace, as he got into bed.

CHAPTER XII.

But ah! my breast is human still;
The rising sigh, the falling tear,
My languid vitals' feeble rill,
The sickness of my soul declare.

But yet with fortitude resign'd,
I'll thank th' inflicter of the blow;
Forbid the sigh, compose my mind,
Nor let the gush of mis'ry flow.

CHATTERTON.

LADY ELLEN REVIS had been employing her morning in various ways; dressing, and reading, and working, as ladies do, who have nothing to do; and thinking, as ladies do not often think,—when her servant informed her that her lordly father required her presence in his library. Lord Norley's library was like every other portion of his house, magnificent and uncomfortable. Just such was his Lordship's own character:—he was a very pompous and by no means a pleasant person to deal with.

"Sit down, Ellen," said the stately gentle-

man, adding, "I wish to have some confidential conversation with you."

Ellen knew of old that all Lord Norley's conversations were difficult of comprehension; but his confidential ones, especially so. He lived very much amongst the place-capt imaginings of political fancy, and confused others as well as himself by a certain species of declamation which he called talking; at the same time, however bewildered his *words* might be, his ideas were concentrated in himself, that *self* being composed of all who were so nearly connected with him as to render their actions of importance in his speculations; and whom he endeavoured to hold in complete vassalage. "Sit down: has your protégé—your newly discovered Canova, Mr. Philip Marsden, been here to-day?"

"Not to-day, papa. I wish you would not insist on his 'taking off my head,' as Mrs. Malaprop says. I intended he should manage your bust, and mamma's and Harry Mortimer's; but really to condemn an artist to perpetuate deformity is a hard task."

"How absurdly sensitive you are on that

point, Ellen!" replied her father. "You magnify the slight defect in your shoulder in a most ridiculous manner; however, be it as you please, it would appear that I have no influence over my nearest connexions. My poor boys, indeed—but they are gone!"

"I am sure, papa, if you wish, I will sit; but——"

"There it is again!" interrupted his Lordship; "and it is just the same with your cousin—there is a 'but' to everything."

Lady Ellen saw that her father was out of temper; and with the natural generosity of a noble mind, she was glad he had chosen to vent his spleen upon her, and not upon her mother or her cousin. She remained silent, waiting the growling of the storm—for Lord Norley's storms seldom accumulated into bursting; they were rather a continuation of petty squalls, an under current of contrary winds, running first one way and then the other; fizzing and fussing, rather than thundering. His Lordship was too prone to be disturbed by petty annoyances, to be ever greatly angry; but these little irritabilities frittered

away, and overthrew some plans and resolves which might have rendered him really useful in his generation. Lord Norley continued twirling a paper-cutter between his finger and thumb, and Lady Ellen's eyes were fixed upon her brother's picture. She was glad it was not hung in a room which she was often obliged to enter, and she wondered how her father could bear it there.

"Poor Reginald!" exclaimed his Lordship, following the direction of her looks, and answering *them*, though she had not spoken a word. "Poor Reginald! he was a fine fellow. I had no trouble with him!"

Lady Ellen remembered how often he had complained of "Poor Reginald!" while living

"Have you seen Harry since breakfast?"

"No, sir."

"Really he *is* very unmanageable, very! I cannot account for it, and yet it is to be accounted for — brought up as he has been, without associates suitable to his rank; and by that Mr. Horace Brown, a very intelligent, but a very intractable person."

Lady Ellen thought that if her father wished to mould Harry Mortimer to his will, it was a pity he had not "brought him up" from the time he was first left destitute.

"I have been talking to him this morning upon two most important topics; first of all relative to his settlement in life—he is nearly four-and-twenty: secondly, as to what course of politics I am to guarantee in a particular quarter if I secure his return."

Lady Ellen's heart beat with a quickness she could not account for at the moment, and her breath came short and thick. His Lordship continued:—

"As to his settlement in life—(it is really very tiresome of Hacket to forget day after day the exact depth I wish the blinds drawn)—I suppose Lady Norley informed you what my desire was on that subject: stay, before you reply to me, Ellen, have the goodness to remember that I imagine I consulted *your* feelings in that arrangement; your zeal for his return could only be interpreted in one way."

"Father," interrupted Lady Ellen, rising from her seat, while the veins in her proud and snowy forehead swelled, and her eyes sparkled,—"My Lord, I cannot permit you to put any such construction upon the desire I felt and expressed, that Henry Mortimer, my cousin-german, your Lordship's sister's only son, should partake of the affluence and rank which (pardon me, my dear father,) it was your duty to bestow on him. While my brothers lived, you may remember that I urged the same point — (Lord Norley smiled); and though Harry's waywardness thwarted your kindness then, you thought of him still, and took him to replace the children you had lost. I cannot—indeed, my Lord, I cannot—suffer the zeal I evinced in my cousin's cause to bear any other than a sisterly interpretation."

"Your disinterestedness is likely to be put to the test, Ellen," replied his Lordship, gravely. "You will not be called upon to bear any other regard than a sisterly one to the *independent* Mr. Harry Mortimer. He told me

this morning, that much as he admired, respected, *venerated* you, for aught I know,—he did not *love* you well enough to make you his wife." In an instant Ellen Revis became white—white as marble; every trace of life vanished from her cheek and lips. Lord Norley rushed forward to support her, but she grasped the chair from which she had risen, and after drawing her breath once or twice with exceeding difficulty, looked up into her father's face. "Dear Ellen, do not let me see this agitation. I feel assured of your preference; and I make no doubt, when he comes to consider his own interests—the property—the advantages — the seat in Parliament — the——"

Lady Ellen had covered her face with her hands when her father recommenced speaking; and he continued, for some time, enumerating the benefits that must accrue, by the union of his daughter and his nephew; advantages which, according to his estimate, were all on Mortimer's side. He was proceeding to state the improbability of any man,

upon cool reflection, shutting his eyes to such benefits, when Lady Ellen, having quite recovered her self-possession, interrupted him,—

"You did not urge these subjects on—on—my cousin?" she inquired, proudly.

"No, Ellen, he would not give me time. I spoke of your union as a settled thing—a consolidation of interests domestic and political—reverted to the course I wished him to adopt—the tone necessary in his conversations—not with you, child (you need not look so alarmed), but with men of a certain party whom he would meet here;—then I spoke of you again, when he flew out with a quantity of exploded nonsense; but I assure you he mentioned you with the utmost respect; and——"

The word respect grated so upon the heart of Ellen Revis, that she did not hear the conclusion of her father's sentence, but clasped her hands, and exclaimed, "Thank God for that!—*that* disgrace is spared me, to be forced upon *any* man as his wife; but worse than all, upon *such* a man as Mortimer!—the idea is

worse than death! Oh, father, father, what has your child done that you should so degrade her?"

Lord Norley appeared terrified at his daughter's energy — it was so powerful, so real:—those who are accustomed to consider human passions and human feelings as the mere toys of life, are always unprepared for the reality—the truthfulness of nature.

"Surely," said his Lordship, "I cannot have been mistaken. Is it possible that you do not love him?"

"Yes, father; I *do* love Harry Mortimer—love him as a brother; but look—fill this great room with diamonds, and say that I should make them all my own by wedding him, I would sooner leave your house a penniless beggar!"

"But are you not aware, Ellen, that treating him as my son, returning him for our own county (though *that*, if he sides with the present ministry, will be but a trifling expense), enabling him to keep up his rank in our sphere, and a thousand other things, must be

a tremendous diminution of your fortune, and you know——"

"Forgive me, father, dearest father, for again interrupting you! I know that the phrase goes 'as crooked as a Lord,' but I know of none that says as crooked as a Lady! Do not trouble yourself to gild *me* as a matrimonial pill for some greedy knave, or half-witted fool to swallow;—Ellen Revis will I live, Ellen Revis will I die! Harry Mortimer can bear your wealth and new sprung honours bravely, and support the ancestral dignity of my dear mother—ay, when all our heads are low. I would not wed him for a crown of kingdoms! Consolidate your political interest as much as you can; but do not, oh! do not degrade your only living child, by forcing her upon her cousin. I honour him a thousand times more for his great honesty."

She threw herself into the arms of her father, who was sorely perplexed, and who really loved his daughter, as a portion of himself, as much as he loved anything—except interest or ambition. How long this scene might have been

prolonged I cannot tell, had not his Lordship been compelled to meet some grandee at the Foreign Office; and as his eye wandered for a moment from the exceeding beauty of his daughter's face, to the timepiece which stood upon his chimney, he saw that his hour was come, and telling Lady Ellen that they would talk again upon this subject, he kissed her cheek, with more affection and less politeness than usual, and entered his punctual carriage, which had waited exactly two minutes and five seconds at the door.

How long Lady Ellen sat in the *fauteuil* where Lord Norley placed her, I know not, nor could she tell. Every feeling of her passionate temperament had been called into action — the conviction that she loved her cousin—had loved him long, pressed round her heart and brain as with a burning zone, and the certainty that he loved not her—that he had rejected her, aroused her pride and her self-love, to uproot the cherished blessing of the only affection her proud nature had ever bowed to. The hours—for they were hours

of agony which she spent in the library—passed by, but not unrecorded — not unregistered; and—let me do her noble nature justice—not unimproved.

"My father was right," she said within her thoughts, "I *did* love him—love him from the first;—it was love, not generosity, that made me urge his claims upon my father's heart. Oh! the praise bestowed upon my disinterested feelings! how bitterly does it rise in judgment against me! I, so selfish—so meanly selfish, as to expect such sacrifice—the sacrifice of merit and much beauty, to my deformity! How blind I have been! talking and railing at my own crookedness, while weaving nets to catch his love! My first feelings, when I first knew him, might have been pardoned; but *then* I knew not Mary, and now that poor girl's conduct to me is made plain. Poor child! she was jealous—jealous of me!—a pretty subject for a fair and lovely woman's jealousy. Oh that Harry had but told me he loved her!—But men will not be sincere: they think that by confessing a

preference for one woman in particular, they insult the whole sex! And Mary too—how little Mary knew me!"

Lady Ellen, when once her eyes were opened, had courage and firmness to look upon the wreck of her affections; not as Mary Lorton would have done, to weep and mourn thereat, but to remedy and repair:—this was one essential difference in their characters. Mary doubted her own strength—Ellen knew that *hers could* do whatever she willed; and her own sufferings at the onset, she felt assured would but render her triumph — the great triumph over self—more decided at the end. A little incident will illustrate my meaning better than the longest chapter.

Lady Ellen and Mary Lorton each desired a rose from off a beautiful tree that was bent to the earth by the weight of its blossoms. Mary fingered the stem so delicately, fearing the thorns, that her hand was severely wounded. Lady Ellen *grasped* the bough, and the thorns were so crushed by the pressure, that they injured her not. The thorns of life, most intelli-

gent reader, may be conquered after the same fashion.

Once convinced in her own powerful and extensive mind of what was right, no earthly consideration could make Ellen Revis swerve therefrom; and luckily for herself and others, her ideas of right were in strict conformity with those principles of religion, of honour, and justice, which elevate human nature.

Many and bitter tears she had given to the wreck of the fairy palace which her heart and imagination had erected and peopled; but having wailed over it, in the solitude of silence of her own heart, her succeeding feeling was how to confer benefits on the living. She recalled every word, look, and action Harry Mortimer had addressed to her since the commencement of their acquaintance, and in no one instance could she blame his conduct. Nay, she recalled his very looks, and with something very like self-reproach for having been so "lightly won," she pronounced him blameless. Nothing tests nobility of soul so strongly as forwarding a rival's claims to

the affection of a beloved object. Ellen Revis was not only noble but proud; and her pride was tried almost beyond its strength by the desire she felt to appear careless of Harry's affections. Yet, mingled as it was with true woman's generosity, it enabled her to address her cousin as he entered the library, though she was glad that it was the gentle light of evening, not the glaring sun of morning, that was streaming through the windows, and that the chair in which she sat was sufficiently high-backed to screen her face from observation.

"Oh, cousin, is it you!" she exclaimed; at the same time pressing her clasped hands on her heart to still its beatings. "Nay, do not attempt to run away, I have been sitting here for hours, reading — I suppose — and waiting your arrival."

Harry stammered out something about being sorry she had waited; and also, that had he known she had been there, he would have come into the library "long ago."

"Harry Mortimer," said Ellen, "I pray

you do not indulge in a habit of story-telling. If you *had* known I was here, you would have gone to any other portion of the dwelling rather than meet me *to-day*,—nor do I wonder at it. However, come and sit down,—no, not *there*, opposite to me, but here, on my right hand,—that will do. You need not draw back —good, my cousin—I am neither going to make love to you, nor offer"—(and here she drew herself up, and—but that she was so completely shaded from the light—Mortimer must have observed the pride that flashed from her eyes)—" nor offer myself as your bride. But I am going to scold you, Harry Mortimer. *What* have you ever seen in Ellen Revis to prevent your considering her your friend? Was I not worthy to be trusted with your secret? Was not my *sisterly* regard for you, my friendship for Mary Lorton, a sufficient guarantee for my good offices?"

" Mary Lorton—secret," murmured Harry as she paused.

" Ay, my brother-cousin!" continued the lady, " I have discovered your secret—your—

why should I hesitate about the word," she added; endeavouring with all a woman's tact to cover the pain, which pronouncing the mystic name gave her—by skilfully turning the subject of her hesitation—"the word is simple, though *you* feel it deeply—I have discovered your love for Mary Lorton!"

"My love for Mary Lorton!" he repeated; "I am sure no word, no act of mine ——"

"The very thing I complain of," she interrupted; "I know you never treated me as a friend."

"Upon my sacred honour, Ellen, a coolness has existed between Mary and me for months. The fact was, she became jealous, silly girl, of your letters and the drawings!—and the letters, though I confessed they came from a lady, I could not in honour show her, containing as they did family affairs, and facts relating solely to my cousins and uncle."

"And it was ill-judgment *not* to show them. Do you not know that those who truly love, though they may have *two hearts*, can have but one soul! The mystery, my good cousin, *to her*, was ill-judged!"

"But how, Lady Ellen, how came you to discover this?"

Lady Ellen Revis paused; and then she told the truth. It is a question with me whether those who tell the truth from impulse, or those who tell the truth from reason, deserve the most credit. Impulse is nature—reason! dare I call it art? Lady Ellen was not artful, and *yet* she reasoned.

"It is awkward," she said, "and yet *why* I know not, for we are cousins—*brother* and *sister* rather—near akin in blood—and in all truth and friendship. My father told me how highly you complimented me this morning, by thinking me too good to bestow upon a man who had no heart to give for mine. Now do not apologize; you rejected cousin Ellen, and must positively present her with a wreath of silver willow! But, notwithstanding your desire to see me mated with a man of heart, and notwithstanding this ugly lump upon my shoulder, I knew human nature too well to suppose you would refuse to swallow the gilded pill, if your heart had not been occu-

pied by something better than heartless speculation!"

"Believe me, Ellen, there is no woman upon earth ——"

"You love so well as me, *except!*—No woman on earth you esteem so highly, *except!*—No woman you would so desire to marry, *except!*—I know it all, cousin."

"Lord Norley has been abrupt. I would not wound ——"

"Harry!" said Lady Ellen, assuming for the first, and indeed it *was* the last time in her life, a proud tone to her cousin. "You cannot suppose from my past conduct that you were ever more to me than a dear relative,—consequently my father was *not* too abrupt. And there can be no danger of my feelings being wounded!"

"Indeed, Ellen, I meant not that," replied Harry, without noticing her manner. "If Mary, on my arrival in London, had manifested the least remains of an affection which grew with *my* growth; but the vanities—the glare—the lovers she has had—the extreme

volatility and ambition of her mother—the heavy toiling after distinction of her father—the ——"

"You do Mary injustice!" interrupted Lady Ellen, firmly. "And as I have been the innocent instrument of setting you all wrong, I will be the direct means of bringing you all right again. You shall see what talents I possess for winding off, and winding on, and winding up. I should have been, putting all things else out of the question, a most ill-assorted wife for you: if you get into Parliament, (which, asking your pardon, is a task fools find easy now-a-days,) the extent of your service to the State will be to make a maiden speech—a speech upon the currency question—one upon the poor-laws—ditto on the duty on malt—a few cautious observations on tithes—write occasional letters to the newspapers—and then accept the Chiltern Hundreds! For me, my regret is, that Talleyrand is too old to marry, and that Metternich has, I believe, a wife; they would have suited me exactly; but as to the other members of the

diplomatic corps, I, Ellen Revis, hold them in sovereign contempt. No; you and Mary will cultivate roses and children, and Uncle Horace and I will be godmamma and godpapa. Have you any idea what Brown Lorton's property really is?"

"I know what it *was;* but living as they have been living lately, I really can form no idea."

"Well," continued Lady Ellen, "I must find that out, because papa must be managed. And—however, the dressing-hour is come—God bless you, Harry. I will set my wits to work for the happiness of you and Mary, and you will both bless Ellen Revis when she is in her grave: there, one kiss upon my hand will do!—it must not be more, or I will tell Mary!" She flew out of the room.

"She is an admirable creature," exclaimed Harry, "and what excellent spirits she has—I never saw her in such spirits—delighted at making others happy—what charming spirits!"

How little do we know of each other in this masquerading world. Before Harry Morti-

mer had finished his encomium upon his cousin's "charming spirits," Lady Ellen had thrown herself upon her bed in an agony of irrepressible anguish: the part she had been playing had overpowered her strength, and so torturing were her feelings, that she would have welcomed death during that and many succeeding hours. Still nothing disturbed her resolution to promote the happiness of her cousin.

Men sacrifice others! Women themselves!

CHAPTER XIII.

Thus does false ambition rule us;
Thus pomp delude, and folly fool us;
To keep a race of flickering knaves.

SHENSTONE.

"I CERTAINLY," said Job Harris, as he stretched his legs to the uttermost upon one chair, while he balanced his body upon another, and threw his arm gracefully over the back of a third, in the housekeeper's-room,—"I certainly, for one, mean to cut the connexion; it is not my ambition to wait on my equals!"

"If things go on as they are going," observed Mrs. Claggitt, "so will I; if one does live with people of a lower order, one expects some advantages out of the common by it. Miss Myrvin, the Duchess of Leitrim's woman, cut me dead in Kensington Gardens Sunday week. I know 'twas because I live with a *parvenu*. As long as there was lots of *wailes*

and company, and things conducted, as a body may say, Mr. Harris, upon a liberality footing, why things and people *could* be put up with; but Mrs. Lorton's taken to her room and the doldrums ——"

"And that Brummagem brute," chimed in Harris, "has made master look into the books; and I know wants to count champagne,—as if any one ever could tell at a dinner how much champagne is drank."

"And it is a thing that flies so—every way," said Mrs. Claggitt.

"To be sure it does. Well, Mrs. Claggitt," replied Harris, "it's a true saying,—'if you wrestle with sweeps you come off with soot,'—it's unknown the rust I have gathered in this family; and, as I said before, for one, I mean to cut the connexion."

"And yet," observed Mrs. Claggitt, musingly, "'Look afore you leap,' is another wise word. Mister Job, you've a purty bit of wages."

"Wages," repeated the servant, contemptuously,—"wages! Mrs. Claggitt, you women

have mercenary minds. What *is* the consideration of wages to a man's reputation. It is something to stand behind the chair of a duke—to call a duchess's carriage. But I've made up my mind; guess to what, Mrs. Claggitt."

"How should I guess," responded the housekeeper; "you're such a terrible high-flier."

"Why I mean to move heaven and earth to get into the minister line!"

"What!" exclaimed Mrs. Claggitt, lifting up her hands and eyes; "to go into the church—live with a parson! Why it's reg'lar starvation now-a-days. And where's the credit!"

"Parson, indeed!" said Harris, with an oath and a look of contempt, which if Mrs. Claggitt had *seen*, she would have made Job remember. "No, madam; to get with a minister of state, the Prime Minister to be sure—*that* would be worth living for—that's something *like* life—the dinners there while he's in office, and which the country pays for—

the wines—the company—and last, the snug-snug, nice little situation as a reward for my services. Ah! we all seek to better ourselves! —that's my ambition!"

"Well, Job Harris, *who* would have thought of that but yourself—certainly you *have* a head—only the ministers have been a changing so much about lately!"

"Never mind that," replied the long-headed Job; "still they all stay in long enough *to give places.*"

"It's a good look-out," said Mrs. Claggitt, pulling down her front, which during the conversation had slipped higher off her forehead than she deemed becoming. "I wish I had such another—they're all so odd to deal with here. It was only yesterday a gentleman at the corner of the square, mistaking me, I suppose, for that set-up girl, Magdalene,"—(Job opened his eyes at the idea!)—"gave me a letter to give Miss Mary, and the silly child threw it into the fire before my face. I am sure, though Mrs. Lorton fancies herself

ill, Miss Mary *might* have a few friends to enliven the house, if it was for nothing else. It's all Mr. Horace Brown's doings, I know, at bottom—and that beast Pike ——"

"Don't mention him, I beg," interrupted Job, affectedly; "his very name makes me ill—upon my honour it does. The fellow never shared with me the contents of the purse his master gave him to purchase civility, though I did demean myself by noticing him."

"Well, then, Miss Maxwell, who is always closeted with my mistress," said Mrs. Claggitt, without heeding his allusion to the purse, "I *could* tell a story about her."

"Nothing that I don't know," said Harris.

"Ah! she was closeted with that old sinner Hor—"

"Hush, Mrs. Claggitt—walls may have ears: I know—and I know also, for all the reputation some one has for propriety and honour, that some one at her own chamber-door took a letter from me, which was given me with an *hin*junction (as the lawyers say) to give it into

her own hands; and the first word she spoke, and she white and tremblin' as a marble statute, was—'My husband has not seen it!'"

"You *don't* say so, Harris—you're a romancing."

"'Pon my honour!" replied the man of napkins, laying his hand on his heart, and bending his head gracefully. "'Pon my honour, Mrs. Claggitt, it is true!"

"Well, after that—but it's a wicked world! —I can match your story, though you won't believe it. I observed that same H. B. call that minx Magdalene into his dressing-room; and when she came out she had been crying, and held a purse in her hand. Beat me *that* if you can!"

"I don't believe it," said Harris, firmly, who, to Mrs. Claggitt's great mortification, admired Magdalene much.

"Not believe it when *I saw* it with my own eyes," exclaimed Mrs. Claggitt.

"Old—elderly ladies' eyes sometimes see double, or put on their spiteful spectacles when they look at the young and the handsome."

"Old!—elderly!" screamed the housekeeper. "Why, you ill-bred, unmannerly cub—you lick-plate. What *do* you mean by that—old, elderly! I'll let your mistress know your base insinuvations—I'll ——"

"Don't lose your temper, pray, Mrs. Claggitt; I hope you will not—I *never* do—it's not my ambition."

"To the Dickons with your ambition!" said the housekeeper; "I'll tell my mistress, as sure as you've a head on your ugly shoulders!"

"*Ugly* shoulders!" retorted Harris, pulling up his neckcloth to give himself an air of dignity. "But tell away, madam; I *can* tell too—the letter to Miss Mary, and the story of Miss Maxwell."

"You said you knew *that* before," interrupted Mrs. Claggitt.

"If I did, I did not tell it. I had a respect for the old gentleman's reputation."

"You ought to have some for your own, Master Job; and then that whey-faced girl" (Mrs. Claggitt's complexion, as may be in-

ferred from this observation, had a "roseate hue") "wouldn't so often come peeping down the area."

"Oh, Mrs. Claggitt, it's better to have two girls peeping down the area, than two husbands threatening prosecutions for bigamy!"

"*I* never had two husbands, and I scorn your insinuations. I never had but one, and I married him to better myself. You're a base man, Job Harris." And the voice which had commenced *fortissimo,* softened to the softest piano, and then she burst into tears.

Harris, regardless of the fair one's agitation, was lounging out of the room, when a footman entered hastily—

"Well!" he exclaimed, "it's a queer world! Maxy has been watching and stopping in the library all the morning, to see Mr. Horace Brown—I heard her ask three times if he was come in! Magdalene, I think, has been after the same errand, for I see her poking her head over the banisters every double knock that comed to the door."

"There!" interrupted Mrs. Claggitt, drying

her eyes, and casting a triumphant look at Harris.

The man continued his story: "At last Mr. Brown came in. Magdalene tripped down, but the old bachelor had already been seized upon by Miss Maxwell, and she had hardly got him into the back parlour—"

"Scandalous!" exclaimed the housekeeper, in a burst of virtuous indignation.

"——when who drives up to the door but Lady Ellen Revis. And what do you think the question was,—not how is Mrs. Lorton, or is Miss Lorton at home, but is Mr. Horace Brown at home? He is, my Lady, says I, but he is engaged, I believe, and Miss Lorton's at home. I do not want to see Miss Lorton, she says, getting out; so do not disturb her yet; but I cannot go away without seeing Mr. Horace Brown, and will wait until he is disengaged."

"What will the world come to!" ejaculated Mrs. Claggitt, putting up her pocket handkerchief, and looking quite cheerful at this importation of fresh scandal. "What room did you show her into, Thomas?"

"The second drawing-room."

"Ah! that puts me in mind to unpin the curtains in the third," said the housekeeper; "no time like the present!" and away, forgetting her tears in her curiosity, posted Mrs. Claggitt.

CHAPTER XIV.

Do any thing but love; or, if thou lovest,
And art a woman, hide thy love from him
Whom thou dost worship: never let him know
How dear he is.

L. E. Landon.

Lady Ellen Revis, be it observed, was nowhere famed for what the vulgar call "*humility;*" what high-minded person ever was? True humility is a quality the vulgar never understand; so that the menials at Brown Lorton's might well have been astonished at her ladyship's offering to *wait* until Horace Brown was disengaged. If the age for necromancy had not been past, the worthy merchant might have had the honour of being burned, or, at the very least, *branded* as a wizard, from the mere fact of his having three women dancing attendance upon him at the

same moment. Ellen Revis was not without the prejudices of her caste, but her strong sound sense kept them in wonderful subjection; in the present instance, she could not have been more anxious to meet a prince of the blood-royal, than she was to encounter the Liverpool merchant. A brief greeting passed between them on his entrance, though Horace looked disturbed and perplexed.

"I fear I have intruded at an unseasonable hour," said Lady Ellen; "but I had something of much moment to inquire about, and I know I am naturally impatient."

Horace assured her he would be most happy to hear whatever she was pleased to say, though, to confess the truth, he felt a *tête-à-tête* with a noble lady as a sort of unwarrantable tax on his good-nature and good manners.

"I believe," she said, with less agitation than any disbeliever in the strength of woman's resolve would deem possible—"I believe, I need not tell you how deeply interested I have felt in the welfare and happiness of my cousin

Harry, to whom, dear Sir, you were a friend when—and you will easily believe I am ashamed to confess it—he had no friend but you!" Horace bowed; it was not the first time a suspicion had crossed his shrewd mind, that Lady Ellen was *too* "deeply interested" in her cousin.

"If," she continued, "there is a being more truly anxious for his well-doing, I think it is yourself; though I will struggle for the distinction of being one of his best, if I have not the power of being his *very* best friend."

"Candid enough," thought Horace; but he suffered the lady to explain herself as best she might, for he offered no comment.

"It is an awkward subject," quoth Lady Ellen, after a pause; "but, I believe he was a philosopher who said, that the motive consecrates the act."

"He must have been a bad one, then," observed our uncle bluntly. "He must have been a bad one, otherwise he would not have made excuses for evil deeds!"

Poor Lady Ellen felt much confused; but her purpose remained unshaken. She had heard of oil being poured on troubled waters; and, moreover, she thought she would pat the lion though he was already chafed.

"Still I fear I must follow the philosopher's precept, and you will not, I am sure, believe that the friend of Mary Lorton, and Harry Mortimer, comes under the severe sentence you have just pronounced."

Horace bowed again, but said nothing. He did Ellen injustice. To be sure, he was an old bachelor, and that unhappy and misguided race can have few opportunities of judging of the beautiful lights and shadows of female character.

"I think it very likely my cousin has communicated to you, that my father, for the purposes of forwarding some political and domestic views, had settled in his own mind that he would, by the intervention of a particular ceremony, transform his daughter into a niece, —yet keep his daughter,—and his nephew into a son, and yet depart not from his nephew."

"Nor suffer his nephew's or his daughter's fortune to depart from him," growled Horace, aloud, thinking to himself, "a pretty *modest* maiden truly: how she deceived my poor Mary!—What a world it is!"

"There are two obstacles to his Lordship's arrangement," continued Lady Ellen, after a courage-giving pause. "In the first place, no earthly power shall ever compel me to be the wife of Harry Mortimer; and in the second, no earthly inducement would ever tempt Harry Mortimer to be my husband."

Horace Brown looked earnestly and steadily in Lady Ellen's face; but she baffled his penetration. What a blessing it was that her mind was of so noble a quality and so finely tempered, for she *was* an admirable, and might have been a dangerous, actress.

"Well, madam, and what then?" said the merchant, advancing his seat nearer to the Peer's daughter: "what then, madam?"

"It is a pity to disappoint papa of a wedding, which, when *comme il faut*" (Horace was so interested that he forgot to frown at the

French), "gives a man increased consequence in the world fashionable—the world political; and, where it *does* exist—though, Heaven knows! I hardly know *where* that is!—in the world domestic! Mr. Brown," she added, abruptly, "Mary and Harry love each other—however they may have quarrelled, they love each other *still*. Will you unite your influence with mine to make them happy?"

She extended her hand to Uncle Horace, who pressed it within both palms, and in spite of herself tears rushed from her eyes. At that instant the keen perceptions of Horace Brown detected the rustle of a silk gown in the third drawing-room;—the next, he threw both folding-doors open, and there was Mrs. Claggitt, of course busied with the curtains.

"Do you London ladies arrange your drawing-rooms in the evening? We, poor country folk, manage to do so in the morning," he said to her, sternly.

"Oh, dear, Sir! oh, la, Sir! Sure, this *is* morning, Sir!" muttered the housekeeper, disconcerted.

"I should call it nearly evening," replied Horace; "but it matters not, morning or evening—tramp—away!—down stairs!—and, hark ye, good woman, when I want you to be present at a conversation, I will send for you! —Now go!"

It is quite impossible to picture the dismay —the rage of Mrs. Claggitt, and useless to repeat the grumbling, and remonstrances, and—to confess the truth—round oaths which burst from her lips, as she descended.

Our London servants are certainly, men and women, eight out of ten, sad reprobates; but it may be a question (Horace Brown asserts it is a *fact*, not a question,) if the example of what is called the fashionable world (whose shadows they are) does not make them so. Be that as it may, Mrs. Claggitt's dismissal gave Lady Ellen time to recover herself, and having once broached the object of her visit, she felt but little difficulty in continuing.

"I suspect you must be well acquainted with my father's peculiar motives; the principal one is a very praiseworthy ambition, and

a desire to consolidate whatever pecuniary resources he can command, to further that ambition."

"I think, madam," interrupted Horace, "his Lordship's motives do not merit to be styled 'peculiar.' Ambition, whether it be called spurious or otherwise, appears to me the moral curse of England. Our schools are 'academies;' our servants seek not service, but 'situations;' our dancers are artists; our attorneys (the rascals!) are grown lawyers; our mantua-makers are fashionists; our milliners, *modistes;* our butchers, purveyors; each village must have its square, and every farmer would be a squire! the ignorant might imagine that to be *distinguished,* was synonymous to being respectable. I am a plain man, madam—an English merchant—nothing more. I beg your pardon, Lady Ellen, but pray do not suffer yourself to imagine that ambition *in our days* is a peculiarity."

"At all events my father *is* ambitious.—He thinks he discovers much in your friend that will make a Statesman!"

"By a Statesman, I suppose," said Horace, "he means one who will uphold State and State-affairs, according to his Lordship's sense of right and wrong."

"I am no politician," replied Lady Ellen, "at least I do not wish to be one just now; and I only desired to observe, that by having not *three*, but *one* fortune to provide, he calculated that his sinews of war would gain strength by the union he proposed."

"His Lordship is an adept in addition, doubtless," observed Horace, sarcastically.

"Mr. Brown," replied Lady Ellen, "you will not surely blame my father for calculating contingencies. I have always understood that forethought was the spirit of trade."

"Trade, madam, has many spirits:—justice, truth, and uprightness are the corner stones of its temple; or, rather (I am not skilful at similes), they are the crowns of its glory. An honest British trader can stand unabashed before the greatest monarch in the world; and, more than that, he can hope to meet his God face to face at the last day!"

Lady Ellen had always disliked trade and its originators; but the honest burst of Uncle Horace compelled her to confess, that *for his sake*, in future, she would honour traders. How rapidly does one generous heart echo the feelings of another!

"At all events, dear Sir," continued Lady Ellen, "my object in seeking you was simply this—Mary and my cousin love each other—I *could* reconcile them in five minutes. The heart, *when* it loves, labours to find excuses for *what* it loves.—Of course, matters are easily arranged between them. And, if I know anything of Mr. and Mrs. Brown Lorton, they would be, in their own set phrase, 'but too much honoured by a such a union' NOW; though Mary has had lovers, more noble, and as rich, nay, far richer than Harry will be in his own right. Yet, they both love Mary, and would be miserable if she, dear girl, were not happy—*that* is all arranged; but, my father, he is still most painfully annoyed at his plans being frustrated—he does not like contradic-

tion. My mother never contradicts him by any chance, and I *never* thwarted him but on that subject. There is but one way to obviate all difficulties with regard to Lord Norley. I have endeavoured, during the last two days, to impress upon him, that, as I am so firm in refusing that Harry should be nearer to me than he is, it is but just I should pay for my obstinacy. I most cheerfully waive all claim to the property (which my dear brothers, had they lived, would have possessed,) in favour of my cousin—I will never receive or appropriate a single penny of it to my own use; the sum secured to me by my mother's settlement is more than enough for one who, when the hey-day of youth is over, with, doubtless, an increased deformity of person, and a heart, which even now is prematurely old, can have but few inducements to mix in the gay world!"

"Noble, generous," murmured Uncle Horace. "But, Lady Ellen, your future settlement in life!"

"Now, Mr. Horace Brown," interrupted

Lady Ellen, with an air of gaiety, "don't you think I am, considering all things, wonderfully *settled* at present? Do you wish me better?"

"No, by Jupiter!" replied the worthy man. "You are a wonderful woman—for a lord's daughter!"

Lady Ellen smiled.

"My father is pleased at my concession, though vexed that his plan has been frustrated; but now, dear Sir, comes another point—Harry must, of course, take your dear Mary as his wife. My father's ——"

"Pride," put in Uncle Horace.

"*That*," replied Lady Ellen, speaking slowly, "could be overcome—by a valuable consideration. Mary has the reputation of great wealth; but my father *will* see every thing in black and white."

"The only way," observed our friend, "to know how we stand with the world, and the world with us!—a very excellent plan."

"But, I cannot help thinking, that your brother's mode of life—his being totally unacquainted with the expenditure necessary for

the peculiar sphere into which he has, I will say, plunged—has ——"

"Involved himself, madam. You are right."

"I feared as much; but when I broach the subject to my father, may I not say that you will consider Mary as *your* child?"

"Ay, madam, that you may!" exclaimed Uncle Horace, delighted at finding a friend, where he most dreaded opposition to his darling project. "Listen one moment: long, long before my partnership with my brother was dissolved, I shared my own profits out in different speculations; if I lost, which was but seldom, I tried at something else:—ships —merchandise—the funds—in Liverpool—in Bristol—Manchester—ay, in the Mart of London (to say nothing of the factories of Iron Birmingham). My name would even then have brought—some few notes more or less—two hundred thousand pounds! Whatever I have touched has prospered—*God's blessing has been on it all!* Ventures to America, to Russia—China—Turkey—Hindostan—have returned freighted to the very decks with

golden cargoes; still I spent no more upon myself than I had ever done; and my own townsmen thought old Horace Brown throve but slowly in comparison to those who made a gilded show. Madam, the frank may trust each other. None, save myself, till now, have known of what I really do possess. I loathe the ostentation that sets forth its deeds, its wealth, —or charities; even your cousin cannot guess how many coffers hold my gold. My brother —it would have been sheer madness to let *him* dream of this. I came to London, having discovered that some deep sharpers had, as I imagined, from the information I received (for I heard not with my own ears), laid a plot to entrap my Mary into matrimony. I have heard of many sharpers since—I have also seen the man I did suspect, but cannot yet find out what 'tis he really aims at. Poor Mary! did your father see with my eyes, Lady Ellen, he would think her far above the price of gold or power; but tell him this: without the slightest reference to my brother's wealth, I will, on Mary's wedding-day, if she wed with

him I wish, tell down in solid gold—debentures—stock—whatever way he will—full fifty thousand pounds:—will *that* suffice?—think you that *that* will satisfy his Lordship's wishes? —convert the bright, the pure, the *honest* blood that flows in her young veins, into the thick, the stagnant pool which creeps with lagging indolence through the patrician arteries of lords and ladies! Will fifty thousand pounds do this? And, hark ye, who will have the residue? Who, but Mary and the man she loves? How I have prayed to God that Mortimer might find no friend but me!—how I should have gloried had he been a blacksmith's son. I loved them both so dearly in their childhood—I prayed so for their union —and their increasing coldness jarred upon my spirits like the dull knocking of a worn-out hammer upon Corinthian brass. Forgive me, Lady Ellen, I judged that *you* increased that coldness—I thought that you were proud and selfish, though Harry said, and Mary would have sworn, you were an angel! And yet," he continued, rising, and pacing up and

down the room, "I would that Harry were not in your sphere—my little violet would have blossomed more sweetly, and been more happy, in her native dell.—They will both forget me in their own happiness."

"That last," said Lady Ellen, while Horace, who had worked himself into a fit of genuine enthusiasm, moved restlessly about the apartment,—"that last is the only selfish sentence you have uttered."

"Lady," he replied, while his brow clouded, "I am growing old—youth casts away sorrows, and replaces new friends with those still more new (for the friendship of the young is more a passion than a principle); but when people advance in life, they lose the power of loving, or inspiring love."

"Not so, Sir; the affections that were attracted by the person, transfer themselves to the mind, when it is lovely."

"Lovely," repeated Uncle Horace, with a change of manner so abrupt, that it made Lady Ellen smile.

"I spoke of the mind," she again repeated.

"Mind! I never knew a man of *mind*, as it

is called, worth a doit!—that is the only thing which reconciles me to the prospect of the boy's getting into the Peerage. Poor fellow!—he had too much *mind* ever to make a rational shilling, though he tried hard for it too. Dear Mary once could do the prettiest sums in practice you ever saw; but now!—oh, London! London!"

Lady Ellen could not avoid thinking of the strange mixtures out of which Nature moulded this man. She could trace in Horace Brown the fire of that same ambition at which he sneered, although she saw how differently it was directed,—another argument in favour of a little theory the Lady had been establishing in her own mind, that our passions, when properly directed, become virtues; when the contrary, they degenerate into the vices which are tacked upon the back of "poor human nature!"

"After all," continued Horace, his thoughts wandering from one chain to another, rather than continuing from link to link,—"after all, why, if he has talent, with me it would have been a curse to him, but now it may be

a blessing to others :—God knows it is a rare commodity amongst them! And, dear Mary! —tell me honestly, Lady Ellen, what do your set say of her?"

"Honestly!" she repeated, smiling, and you expect *that* from a Peer's daughter. "Some, then, say it is a pity she was not highly born; others, it is a pity she was not highly bred. The men all call her lovely—the women deny her claim to prettiness, except those who have sons to marry. Some are sorry she has a mother; others wonder when her father will die of apoplexy.—The report of her uncle's wealth has added much to her consequence."

"And her gentleness—her virtues!" chimed in Horace Brown.

"Pshaw! In an heiress gentleness would be called a want of *ton,* and virtue follows as a matter of course—*it is never tempted!*"

"And is my Mary to live amongst such a set!" exclaimed Uncle Horace, doubting in his own mind whether he was not conniving at her misery by increasing her fortune.

"Make yourself easy, Sir, on that score.

Mary and my cousin will, after a few years, vegetate to your heart's content upon their own estate:—my father's pains will be thrown away upon Mortimer. No, no; they will establish schools, clothe and educate dirty children, by which means the race of knaves and bad servants will be perpetuated; feed the poor—a sure way to encourage idleness. Harry will fish in a lake, and Mary will read poetry, descriptive of the cruelty of fox-hunting, the while, on a bank by his side, looking both of them fit to sit for a family portrait of domestic felicity, which will, doubtless, be completed by the introduction of a little Master Horace, or, perhaps, my little godchild—Miss Ellen. *He* will be a county magistrate: for two or three sessions a county Member; and sweet Mary will be a modernized edition of Lady Bountiful! *There,* in such a sphere," added Lady Ellen, in a subdued tone, and with an altered manner, "she will not be thought a *parvenue* —she will be hailed as a blessing!"

"But your father!"

"Oh! not a word to him of schools or things

of the sort! he will find out his mistake in time; when, like most Ministerial mistakes, it will be too late to remedy the evils they have occasioned," exclaimed Lady Ellen, rising. "Mr. Brown, I have been as explicit with you as you have been with me; think not, if I have spoken lightly upon one or two points of my father's character, that I love him lightly; not so. A *little* more of any one of the really noble qualities he possesses, would have made him an illustrious character. As it is, he is *my* father, and Harry's uncle!—for both our sakes, you will forget that he is a *Peer*, and respect him as a *man*."

"I hope," said Horace, recalling portions of the conversation which had touched upon the Peerage, "I hope, Lady Ellen, I have said nothing wounding or offensive to your feelings.—I would not for the world!——"

"My dear Sir," she interrupted, "whatever you have said, of this I am convinced, you would not wound me *for the world*—and I am *not* wounded. See my cousin—talk with Mary—I will speak to my father."

"There is no necessity," said Uncle Horace, warily, "to tell him of the *extended* wealth I have told you I possess. I *could* give Mary more at once—and would—and will—if it be necessary; but—otherwise—it is a pity to call in such sums as make large per centage:—and, Lady Ellen, the fifty thousand pounds must not be talked of; for those in Liverpool—all worthy men and true—would think me mad to withdraw such monies; and at such a time, when seven or ten per cent. could be produced by its employment."

"I understand," said Lady Ellen, wondering at the new page in his character which had been turned, "you do not want the reputation of having so large a sum to spare; nor do you wish to be thought careless of the same."

"Exactly, to a tittle, lady; for, mark you, men's thoughts are either gold or brass. If the world thinks well of your concerns, their thoughts are letters of rich credit upon society; if not——"

"Brass weighs a vessel down!" said Lady Ellen, smiling.

She bade him kindly farewell;—and Uncle Horace handed her into her carriage with as much respect as if she had been the daughter of the greatest merchant in England.

"It is such a pity," thought Uncle Horace, as he returned to the house, "*that she is not a man of business.*"

CHAPTER XV.

And hopes, and fears that kindle hope,
An undistinguishable throng,
And gentle wishes long subdued,
Subdued and cherish'd long.

COLERIDGE.

"SING it again, Mary—oh, sing it to me once more—it recalls the hours—whisper,—nay, closer still,—the hours—before you became jealous of a kind cousin—and I believed you loved me not."

"For shame, Harry!"

"Nay, sing again."

"Look you—a string is broken."

"Well, touch the chords."

"There—hear how it jars!"

"Mark, dearest Mary,—one little unsound string can mar the music of the whole! So it is with love—one jarring thought destroys its harmony. Let us remember this."

"Did you learn that conceit of Uncle

Horace?" inquired the maiden, as she re-strung the instrument.

"No, Mary. Uncle Horace is matter-of-fact enough for marriage—but not much troubled about the romance of love."

"Of Lady Ellen, then?"

"No, nor of Lady Ellen—nor of Lord Norley."

Mary laughed. "I wish," she said, "dear Ellen were but here—within one week she brought us so much happiness—set all things in such delicious tune—explained—arranged and rectified—made strangers friends—the proud humble—the humble proud—and yet would not remain near us to share the blessings of her own creation."

"She has promised to return soon—for town is yet full—and Brighton at this season (for I know far less than you do of fashion, Mary)—Brighton, they tell me, is dulled to deep stupidity."

"She looked so ill," said Mary, "before she went."

"Her mother said the change would do her

good. You must love Lady Norley, I think, Mary—she is a glorious woman!"

"She is, indeed; the dignity of her rank is overshadowed by the dignity and majesty of her virtues."

"I feel proud of Lady Norley's good opinion," said Mortimer. "And you, Mary, notwithstanding my lordly uncle's disappointment, have raised me in his esteem. Ah gold! gold! it is a wondrous talisman—and he values me, like others, for its sake."

"I cannot tell how it is," replied Mary, "but I feel a sad misgiving as to my future conduct. I have never been at ease in this grand circle—Maxy has preached, and my dear mother talked for hours—but yet I trembled—it was in vain they told me of the power of my wealth—it was in vain—." She paused and blushed: and Harry at first enjoying her confusion, but at last took pity and said,—"Go on, Mary, or skip them if you like. You were going, I suppose, to say it was in vain you had so many lovers! Was it not so?"

"Ay," continued Mary; "and, skipping the lovers, I was going to say that, with respect to wealth, those amongst the aristocracy who really despise it seem so much the best, the most to be respected; that it has been only *their esteem, their* kind looks, I longed for."

"Right, Mary! And as their esteem is not to be purchased by wealth, what, think you, *can* purchase it?"

"I know not; virtue may—if it is of that illustrious nature which shines forth even to the heavens! Talent—but then before they hear of it, Uncle Horace says it must be distinguished! They seem too much encircled in their own glory to be of the benefit they might to such a commercial people as the English—at least so Uncle Horace says."

"Well, sweet one, you will be really of them, I suppose—(if my plebeian education does not hold me back). And this I do believe, that modest merit like yours, Mary—so simple—so beautiful—yet set in such fine gold—will steal upon their hearts, where pretenders could never make impression."

"Ay—they will say, perhaps, that I am vastly well for a rich trader's daughter!"

"Mary—this matter takes an unworthy hold upon your mind," said Mortimer, seriously—"gain courage, my own love—remain yourself—keep that sweet innocence which won my heart—and that deep purity of truth and action which secured it to you, even when you cast me from you. What is there of real value you do not possess? Beauty—and youth—and talent—for all purposes of taste and usefulness—and what all great ones covet—wealth—and an unspotted reputation. What would you more? The station, sweet, which now you tremble at, and say you like not?—This is absurd."

"Not so," she replied. "I do but fear, that should you be a senator—a man (as surely you must be) to command attention in the world—I shall be unable to keep up the dignity, the high behaviour, which would be your due: instead of leading, I should tremble following—you cannot think how now I tremble in presence of high rank."

"Mary—this must not be. We have often, dearest, in the wild country (do you remember the bathing-lodge in Wales?) looked from the brow of that high cliff, which toppled o'er the sea, upon the midnight skies. Do you remember noting how the moon, bright heaven's queen, pursued her steady way; the planets, and the stars of greatest magnitude, climbing the sky in unambitious, yet most glorious order? *They* wander not from their allotted paths, my love—nor do the small, small stars, those feeble specks of light that seem to our short sight smaller than dew-drops, seek to shoot athwart the heavens, and mount ————! If they did ——"

"Harry, I have seen a shooting star," interrupted Mary.

"A *falling* one, you mean; some discontented sparkler seeking a more extended orbit, forgetting that the hand of God arranged the harmony of nature, and that, small as it was, its presence *where He had placed it* was essential to the universal whole."

"Harry—I will *not* be a *falling star.* I

know that you learned this of Uncle Horace—his voice is not so sweetly tuned as yours, but it is his wisdom—I would that I were wise—but living evermore beneath your shadow, I shall, like the clay on which the rose dew dropped, imbibe your fragrance."

"A truce to poetry and compliment."

"But why to poetry?" she asked.

"Because, dear Mary, when we are married, our life shall be one pastoral poem."

"With notes in prose—of courts, and parliaments, and laws. If we are not poetry to each other, I fear we shall find it scarce. My mother, they say, was once romantic—yet see how she is changed."

Mary paused, and her bright eyes filled with tears.—That a deep-brooding melancholy had taken possession of Mrs. Brown Lorton was evident to her family—the eagerness with which she had sought and courted fashionable society had sunk into an unaccountable apathy—Miss Maxwell, true in some degree to the purse Uncle Horace had so well filled, confided to him that Mrs. Lorton received letters and

replied to them—that she received them with secrecy and agitation, and replied to them while shedding many tears—that she (Miss Maxwell) could not manage, with all her art, to make out the purport of this correspondence, though she thought she knew from whence the letters came—and though Uncle Horace kept his opinion to himself, certain it was that Miss Maxwell fixed upon the person whom he suspected had laid a train to obtain his niece's hand.

This was Uncle Horace's great and perplexing mystery. Keen and observant to a degree seldom attained in any sphere of life—his acuteness had been chiefly directed to the mercantile transactions, in which he engaged with an almost unparalleled combination of caution and vigour. The conversation Peter Pike had overheard, in a manner which it would be tedious and unnecessary to recount, impressed upon his mind the belief that a foreigner of considerable talent, though by no means young or of very great personal attraction, meditated repairing a

shattered fortune by renewing the acquaintance of early years with Mrs. Brown Lorton and gaining the hand of the youthful heiress. This, at least, was the conclusion he drew from what Peter reported. This was *the* great object of his journey to London—though it has been shown he had another of lesser interest—but his conjectures became completely at fault when the stranger continued in London without making any effort to be even introduced to Miss Lorton, though it was evident his residence in the mighty city was known to her mother.

The breach between Mary and her lover had been rapidly healed by the disinterested interference of Lady Ellen Revis; who, when her task was accomplished, had felt that absence and repose were necessary for the restoration of her over-excited and generous mind to its wonted tranquillity; and Uncle Horace had the gratification of seeing his darling project on the eve of being accomplished. He had even begun to think who of the few he regarded was in the most trouble

—for of course, when once he had set matters right in his brother's establishment, he would leave his protégées to their happiness for a time, and seek whom he could next serve. The young sculptor, Philip Marsden, had interested this worthy, but eccentric man, most deeply; and he would have been perfectly delighted in the fulfilment of his old, and the pursuit of his new, happiness, "if," as Peter Pike expressed it, "things had been all square in the Square; but there was a deal to settle yet before all the mystifications were cleared up." In this opinion Peter was correct.

Lady Ellen's disinterested generosity had conquered her father's objection, and Mr. Brown's liberal and unexpected settlement upon his niece had made the Peer calculate thus:—"If Ellen is content with twenty, or, say, fifteen thousand pounds, and Harry marries a girl with fifty thousand—absolute cash—the family property is at once increased thirty or thirty-five thousand pounds. Then again—Brown Lorton's estate in Suffolk commands

very considerable parliamentary influence, though he does not, poor man! know how to use it; but I do, and that is all the better. It joins my estates, and its former occupier gave me more trouble than enough in former years. *He* is out of the way, and I shall have no difficulty in managing Lorton;—those sort of men, anxious to cling to the skirts of the nobility, never care about being cat's-pawed, until they find their nails burnt off; and *then* they are helpless! Altogether, if the bar plebeian be well gilt—it is no great disadvantage —Lorton will think himself honoured—I wish I apprehended no more difficulty in other quarters. My nephew has got a strange mingling of, what he calls, independent feelings; how, Heaven knows! except from that golden trader: —can't manage *him*—have tried him in every way—no ambition in my way, and yet proud as Lucifer:—told *me* he was proud of being an *English trader!*—good idea that, faith.— What a fool Ellen is!—I could have sworn she liked her cousin, and he her!—fortunate

Miss Lorton having much money, for she *is* pretty, and men, when they are either very young or very old, do strange things for what they call love—never could understand *that* either.—If I could but have foreseen the loss of my poor boys, would have brought Harry up differently.—I think his wife, that is to be, will stimulate his ambition—*that* was the grand thing in Ellen. Mrs. Lorton, a poor, pretty, weak, vain, gabbling woman, proud of her reputation and her daughter—the father and mother must both retire to the country; unless, on an emergency, I was to get Lorton into Parliament—he is young still—but I do not think *that* will be at all necessary;—we shall see," &c. &c.

Leaving his Lordship with his determination to " see," as far as he could, we will listen to Mary's song, which ought to have been sung at the commencement of the chapter; the words, be it observed, derived their fascination from her voice and expression, rather than from any merit of their own.

Where is Love found? The happy and true,
Who is never weary, or dull, or lonely;
Who is ever the same, yet always new;
Who gladdens the heart, but the pure heart only;
Who smiles away sorrow, and drives away strife,
Or, if the world frown, is at hand to cheer us;
Who smooths both the up-hill and down-hill of life;
And in age, as in youth, is ever near us—
Where is this Love?

Shall we meet him in Cities? He is not there,
Where Art presides with her thousand lures;
And Pleasure seeks, hand in hand with Care,
The hearts that she tempts, but never secures;
Where Mirth never gladdens, but all that's gay
Is the banquet of Dead-sea fruits out spread;
Where the revel by night, and the sleep by day,
Bring the burning pulse and the aching head—
Love is not there!

Where is Love found? Where the wild flowers grow,
And the birds and the breezes both are singing,
And heaven and earth have a healthy glow—
A blessing that each unto each is bringing;
Where the fruit-trees blossom, and fields are green,
At either side of some silent river;
And Nature—the mother of Love—is seen,
The gentle, yet bountiful, beauty-giver—
There Love is found!

Mary was, perhaps, unconscious of the energy with which she repeated the *refrain* of her ditty; but while she had been singing, her mother and Miss Maxwell entered the room together.

Mrs. Brown Lorton had been singularly beautiful in her youth; and Peter Pike only said the truth when he affirmed that "Miss Mary was not as handsome as her mother."

Mrs. Lorton's features were delicately cast; and though Horace Brown believed she was of foreign origin, her eyes were blue, and a profusion of light auburn hair curled with undiminished luxuriance over her brow; her face had a soft and childish expression, which accorded well with her musical laugh and the gentle tones of her voice. She dressed judiciously (let no one despise the "accomplishment," for such it really is), and her kindly and affectionate nature would have been duly appreciated in cottage life, where nothing beyond kindness and affection is expected; but she failed in the sphere in which she wished to

move. Ignorant of the extended knowledge as to the routine of *the* world that society requires, yet ambitious to be considered its ornament, Mrs. Lorton had for ever bade adieu to the *éclat* and happiness which she derived in the country from being the reigning queen of her own circle, where her taste and beauty gave her so decided a superiority.

It was impossible not to remark the "change' of which Mary had spoken; her once careless and joyous features were crushed, as it were, by an expression of anxiety and misery; and instead of seriousness being an effort, gaiety had become one.

Uncle Horace, that morning, had brought Mary a bouquet of beautiful summer flowers—brought them, not ordered them; and Mary had arranged roses, and all, in a deep china bowl, where they had sufficient room to display their various perfections. Her mother, as I have said, entered with Miss Maxwell while she was singing, and sat down at the table where the flowers stood. She bent over

them, and Harry observed that her tears fell fast upon their leaves.

"Beautiful! charming! delightful!" exclaimed the toady; "really your voice improves every hour—I never heard anything like it—it is quite miraculous—Lady Flasherton herself observed it to me the last time she heard you:—'Maxwell,' she said, 'with a few hints from you, that girl would equal Kitty Stephens—quite her style.'—She always calls Miss Stephens Kitty—it is her way—delightful woman Lady Flasherton.—Do *you* know her, Mr. Mortimer?"

"I have heard *you* speak of her before, I think," replied Harry, with some of Uncle Horace's dryness.

He had conceived a strong prejudice against Miss Maxwell from the first moment he saw her—of course his acquaintance with her was of recent date;—happily for them all, they had not known nor needed such a *friend,* until they entered the tattered lists of fashionable life. Miss Maxwell was certainly a "most

civil-spoken lady" *to* every body—what she said *of* every body was another matter: she held it as a principle that civility *cost* nothing, except, perhaps, a sort of moral penance, which she made up for by being trebly malicious when the object of civility was out of sight; but I must do her justice—she could be polite to Harry, without doing any violence to her feelings, which, like most maiden ladies of a certain age, were peculiarly tender towards young and handsome men.

While Miss Maxwell complimented Mary and flattered Harry, Mrs. Brown Lorton appeared bent upon analyzing the perfume and the hues of the beautiful flowers; but Mortimer saw she was still weeping, and dexterously contrived to draw Miss Maxwell to the drawing-room, requesting her to sing some of Miss Stephens's songs, in Miss Stephens's style—an effort made by many, as well as Miss Maxwell, and with as little success.

Mary, blessing Harry for his consideration, threw herself on her knees, by her mother's

side. She folded her arms round her neck, and as she drew her head towards her, kissed off the tears which were pouring from her eyes; as she looked up to her face, she shuddered at the deep calm expression of settled sorrow which covered her features as with a pall.

"Mother, dearest mother!" she exclaimed. "Oh, tell me—tell me what it is that has so changed you! tell me—oh, do tell me!—it is Mary—your own Mary that asks you. Mother! am I not worthy to be your friend?"

Is there in the whole world one who comprehends not the magic of that word "mother!" Its sound—its associations—its melody—its powerful, natural music! How it steals into the heart!—in it are centred all the affections of our youth; and when are they so well worth having as before the world has taught them its selfishness—its coldness—the practised evil of its false wisdom? It is a beautiful word—mother! It seems as though the sound was born of Nature. No child under the influence of excitement ex-

claims "Mamma!"—it has an artificial echo: but "mother"—oh, blessed word! how does it recall the age of helplessness, when a mother watched the days of childhood—when a mother taught the days of youth—when a mother counselled the days of matured existence—when the mother blends the character of a friend and a companion with the devoted tenderness of—of what?—a mother!—the word has no companion.

Mrs. Lorton looked mournfully in her daughter's face, and wept on:—it seemed as if the fountain of her tears was still full, still overflowing:—her features were motionless, except that her lip quivered; and long was it ere she made any reply to her daughter's appeal.

"I must tell you, Mary—I must tell you—and yet why?—to make you unhappy—not, thank God! as unhappy as myself—*that* you can never be—your heart rejoices in the fulfilment of its *first* affection—you have no temptation to concealment—no motive for deception——." She paused, as if fearing she

had said too much, while Mary breathlessly awaited her words. "You are now, Mary," she continued, "about to be united to the object of your love; and, in truth, had you told me that you loved him, even before Lord Norley brought him forward as his son, I do not think I would have opposed your wishes."

"Nay," interrupted Mary; "but you know, ever since we have been in London, you have been so immersed in plans of pleasure, and the pleasures of plans, that we have had no time for the confidential intercourse in which we passed so many happy hours in the country."

"But in the country, Mary—you quarrelled with Harry in the country, without ever consulting me about it—and yet it appears you loved him all the time: never trifle with your happiness, my child. And now, when you are married, your father and I will be quite overlooked—forgotten. Would I could be certain that *all* would be forgotten—I mean, not known!"

She paused abruptly in her weak and wa-

vering observations; and Mary, almost trembling, though she knew not why, inquired—

"What forgotten?—what known?"

"Known?" repeated her mother, following on the word rather than replying to the question; "all things are known, sooner or later—it is absurd to imagine anything concealed; remember, Mary, that concealment is impossible:—you were very wrong in concealing your attachment for Harry."

"Mamma, I never attempted to conceal anything; you know—you must surely remember—what pains you took to make me forget him."

"Well," replied Mrs. Lorton, "perhaps I did *then;* but things are changed. Oh, Mary, would to God that we were out of London!"

Mary involuntarily started with astonishment;—that her mother, who had so frequently declared the impossibility of living anywhere but in London, should so earnestly desire to be out of it, was a marvel she could not comprehend:—there was no mistaking the earnestness of her words. She continued, after a

short pause, in the same tone, for Mary was unable to interrupt her :—

"I feel such a depression—such a sinking both of mind and body, that I cannot support the crowds and fashion as I used. The congratulations which have poured upon me, on your approaching marriage, seem cold and heartless. The cards of inquiry—and the calls:—ah, Mary, do you remember, in the country how affectionate every one was, and how they used to look up to me, and consult my taste?—and the fashions I used to invent—and the popularity ball I gave when your father was created an alderman!—to be sure, that was in the country—and here, nobody is anybody; though I am sure the sums we have spent!—the money we have laid out!—and so little, so very little of real happiness for it! And that Lady Flasherton—the jewels I have given Maxwell for that woman—the presentation cost me—no matter! If you had only seen the civil sneer with which she wished me joy of your wedding that is to be; and when I talked of the old affection between

you and Harry, if you had only heard her talk of his changed situation, and how gratifying it must have been to find him still attached—and attached to you—forgetting how my poor girl is gilded!"

"That," said Mary, warmly, "never operated upon him."

"Perhaps not," said her mother, in the same low, wailing tone; "and yet, Mary, it is hard to say how gold operates — or upon whom!"

"Well, dearest mother, we will not talk of that. Uncle Horace, you know, says——"

"What care I what he says!" interrupted Mrs. Lorton, in anger. "Uncle Horace meets me everywhere—he is a perpetual spy! Maxwell—your father—Harry—and you yourself, Mary—you, yourself—think nothing right but what he says—nothing right but what he does. —You love your Uncle Horace better than you do me!"

To this petulant and unkind observation Mary replied by a burst of tears; and after much soothing on the part of her mother, Mrs.

Lorton returned to the same strain, though Mary endeavoured by every means in her power to bring her back to the subject they had started from—the real cause of her changed feelings and manners.

Mary saw that her mother was playing her off; for every sentence she uttered showed distinctly what a heavy pall weighed upon her spirits, and that the ordinary topics upon which she murmured were only the results of previous misery, tinting everything to its own sallow hue. She continued murmuring against one, against the other—complaining of the world's pride—of its vanity (she, herself, so lately amongst the vainest)—of its emptiness—of its wickedness—of the manner in which her husband, once so domestic, was estranged from her society by the dinner-giving and dinner-eating people, who pretended to patronize the dinner-maker, only for the sake of the feast!—of his fast-coming parsimony, until her daughter, sick at heart, and weary of such themes, would have rejoiced at escaping therefrom, but for the

overwhelming desire she experienced to dive deeper into a mystery which she *felt*, without knowing why, would be the source of misery to more than to herself. What an extraordinary mental phenomenon is what is termed presentiment! how perfectly unaccountable!—how mysterious! What field it affords for speculation!—that hovering of the cloud—that gathering of the tempest; when flowers are blossoming around us—when music is ringing its joyful changes in our ears—when all we have hoped for seems within our grasp, still we *feel* the coming sorrow—we *feel* that the arrow is pointed, though we know not where it will strike.

CHAPTER XVI.

In meaner minds Ambition works alone;
But with such art puts Virtue's aspect on,
That not more like in feature and in mien,
The god and mortal in the comic scene.

YOUNG.

MANY interviews passed between Mary and her mother, of as unsatisfactory a nature as the one so slightly sketched in the preceding pages; instead of forcing—absolutely forcing herself into society, as she had done at the commencement of her fashionable career, Mrs. Brown Lorton shrank in the most sensitive manner from observation. If the necessary preparations for Mary's marriage called her forth, she flew in and out of her carriage with the rapidity of lightning;—if she was prevailed on to drive in the Park, she invariably drew down the blind, and folded her veil over her face, although the season was at its close, and

Lord and Lady Norley's connexions overlooked, as they expressed it, "for *that* season, and for *certain* reasons," the plebeian connexion Lord Norley's nephew was about to make, by "accepting" the daughter of a Liverpool merchant; although those of the high and mighty, who had never called before, called now, and condescended to invite Mr. and Mrs. Brown Lorton, not only to their public, but to their more *récherché* entertainments. Notwithstanding this last temptation—which to those ambitious of fashionable distinction it might seem impossible to withstand—Mrs. Lorton remained at home, perfectly aware it was at the risk of displeasing those very persons, whom so short a time before she would have almost died to obtain the least notice from. Horace Brown would have fancied that she was recovering her senses—if he could have been brought to believe she ever possessed any of those enviable gifts;—but her bitterness towards him remained unmitigated; nay, it was rather increased than diminished; and Uncle Horace taxed Miss

Maxwell privately with playing him false, and fomenting disunion.

Mr. Brown Lorton was neither affected by his wife's change, his brother's quaintness, nor his daughter's approaching marriage; he had plodded in his counting-house, without entering into any of those shrewd, but dangerous speculations which had made his brother as superior to him in wealth as he was in talent; and now, perfectly satisfied, he plodded at his dinners, and was certainly more proud of his excellence as a judge of the gastronomic art, than ever he had been of any other source of his success. Mary must have remained at home from one or two "most important" presentations, as Lord Norley pronounced them to be, if it had not been for Lady Norley's kindness, who chaperoned her very graciously. Lady Ellen, too, had triumphed over herself, and returned to town in time for the last drawing-room. Major Blaney had retired from the list of Mary's suitors with more sorrow than many would have believed, had they been told that the gay Major regretted the

loss of the fair maid's hand, quite as much as the loss of her fortune! And his lounging companions, awed by young Mortimer's superiority, had given up wondering and exclaiming at his "success" and popularity, and confined themselves to occasional hits at his "good fortune."

In this same "good fortune," Harry was a religious believer; he was overwhelmed by the "golden shower" which had descended upon him. Young, animated by a high and generous spirit, which had been neither curbed nor broken, he gave himself freely up to the intoxication of the fleeting hours, overflowing as they were with happiness. He laughed at the change that had taken place in Mrs. Lorton's manners and habits; he had observed her capricious and variable temper for too long a period to heed much her present humours; and he by turns reasoned with, and by turns chid his beloved Mary for giving so much anxiety to what he considered merely a change of temper, that would pass away before the colour of her next new dress was decided

upon. But Mary loved her mother too well to be thus deceived; and the bitter feeling that she was deemed unworthy of her parent's confidence, mingled itself with surmises as to the cause, mysterious and hidden as it was, that at such a time had overcast her mother's happiness.

To Lady Ellen Revis she could talk freely; but Lady Ellen saw too little of Mrs. Lorton to judge as to the real state of her mind, and knowing Mary's gentle and affectionate nature, she was led to believe that Mrs. Brown Lorton absurdly imagined that she was *now* of sufficient consequence to play *la première rôle* in the world of fashion, and had decided upon adopting that of *la belle capricieuse.* Thus poor Mary met with but little sympathy, and she was perfectly aware that numberless persons designated her mother as arrogant and affected, while she felt assured that she was the victim of some deep and secret anguish. This knowledge embittered all her enjoyments, and cast a sadness over her coun-

tenance which her lover and her uncle both lamented.

Lady Ellen had made a glorious effort to uproot the cherished affection; which, if successful, is the charm, if blighted, becomes the bane, of woman's life. Every virtuous, every noble feeling assisted her resolve, and she imagined she had triumphed; but an affection is rarely, indeed, *destroyed* in woman's heart; it may be supplanted, but unless another take its place, the memory of the first is unknowingly cherished—ay, cherished, while a spark of life remains in the fevered, affectionate bosom. I do not say that a woman loves but *once*, but I do affirm that love is necessary to her existence; and blessed be the Wisdom that made it so!

There was no sacrifice Lady Ellen would not make for those she loved:—her love was heroism—her heroism the spirit of love; and with all that, she was proud of her sacrifice, perhaps too proud; for when she looked round with her quick and intelligent eye upon the cold and selfish world, and contrasted it with

her own upright purposes, she thanked God "that *she* was not such as others were." Lady Ellen Revis was the most busied of all for the approaching nuptials; the preparations afforded her employment, and she laboured to convince herself that her doing so, was a proof that her heart rested where it ought—within her own bosom.

"Ellen," said her father, one morning, "you are quite as anxious that everything should be as it ought for your cousin's bridal, as if you, not Miss Lorton, were to be the bride."

"My Lord!" she exclaimed, not knowing what she said.

"You are quite as anxious that everything should be as it ought for your cousin's bridal, as if you, not Miss Lorton, were to be the bride," repeated the Peer.

"Oh, yes, Sir—quite," replied Lady Ellen bending over her coffee, to hide her changing colour.

"The sugar, my dear. Bless me, child, how your hand trembles—are you ill, Ellen? Really the last month of the season, and the

last month of the session, destroy the constitutions of both men and women."

"It does, indeed, Sir."

"I am sure I hope Harry will relieve me of a portion of the weight of public business which is bowing me down to the grave! I wish you would speak to him about it, Ellen. I much desire this wedding to be over; I am sure when I was going to be married to your mother, I never neglected my parliamentary duties."

"But Harry is not yet in Parliament," expostulated the generous Lady Ellen.

"The reason, of all others, that he ought to go down to the House every night."

"*Which* House does your Lordship mean?" inquired his daughter,—perhaps with a desire to draw her father from domestic topics.

"I am really astonished that you, Lady Ellen Revis, should ask such a question!" replied his Lordship. "Whatever *is* to be learnt of grace of manner, or elegance of diction, cannot be acquired, I imagine, in the Lower House; where, if Mortimer does as I

desire, his stay will only be a step to something better. I cannot avoid repeating, Lady Ellen, that I am astonished at *my* daughter's not knowing *at once* to *which* of the Houses of Parliament I referred. If I do not mistake, *you* have visited both: will you have the goodness to inform me what you heard or saw in the House—the *reformed* House of Commons, that would lead you to suppose I *could* think it a fit school for the study of any one gentlemanly quality."

"Dear father," said Lady Ellen, glad that her purpose was effected, and yet anxious to soften his asperity; "there are still, thank God, some gentlemen left in the Lower House."

"Undoubtedly, Lady Ellen, so there are; but have the goodness to inform me who you heard;—you went with your mother, I imagine."

"We were rather unfortunate, I think: the first gent—person I mean—who spoke, was ——— ———."

"Bah!" exclaimed his Lordship, passing

his cup from him in evident displeasure; "good!"

"The next was that tough old agriculturist, ———."

"Bah!" again muttered Lord Norley, rising from his chair; "go on, Lady Ellen."

"I really forget—some Irish members, I believe," replied his daughter, shrinking from the scene, which promised to become *stronger* than she had anticipated.

"Ah! 'An ounce of civit, good apothecary!' Were their coats on or off?—or can you inform me if you understood, as well as heard, their voices!"

"I really forget, papa;—it was very hot and very disagreeable in the ventilator,—and finding that Sir Robert did not intend speaking, we came away!"

"I am glad you did,—coming away immediately was the only atonement you could make for going there at all. I should have supposed that the single specimen you had of *Commons' oratory* would have prevented your fancying for a moment that I could imagine

any young man benefited by listening to such as you have named!"

"Why, then, insist upon Harry's making one amongst them?" inquired Lady Ellen.

"I gave you credit for more tact than to ask such a question!" replied his Lordship, resuming his seat, and placing his right hand on the table.

This Lady Ellen knew was the preliminary to a speech —"*explanation*" Lord Norley called it—and accordingly he commenced. And his daughter listened for three-quarters of an hour at least; during which time sundry well-known phrases struck upon her ear, such as, "Consolidated Interests"—"Agricultural districts"—"Parliamentary Representatives" — "Agitators" — "Conservatives" — and "State expediency"—"Lord John Russell" —"Necessity for exertion"—"Destructives" — "Radicalism" — "Sir Robert Peel" — "Public good" — "Bench of Bishops" — —"horrid Conspiracy"—and a host of other sounds; concluded by a desire that Lady Ellen would impress upon her cousin's mind

the necessity there was for his spending the evenings of the next week in the House of Peers instead of with Mary Lorton,—as Parliament would adjourn in a week, and the bridal take place the morning afterwards.

CHAPTER XVII.

Seek to be good, but aim not to be great;
A woman's noblest station is retreat;
Her fairest virtues fly from public sight,
Domestic worth, that shuns too strong a light.

LYTTLETON.

"ANOTHER day—only another day!" whispered Harry, as he ardently pressed the hand of his betrothed to his lips. "Another day, Mary, and then you will be all mine own."

The week had passed as lovers' weeks invariably do, with a rapidity for which both declared they could not account:—

"For who to sober measurement
Time's happy swiftness brings—
When birds of Paradise have lent
The plumage of their wings."

Only, as Harry said, "two days!" and yet so much remained to be done. The *modistes* were in despair—Mrs. Claggit (who had resumed

her good temper, and made up her quarrel with Job Harris, at the prospect of a "good alliance," and an increase of "vails"), vowed that the breakfast arrangements could hardly be finished by the time—Peter Pike rejoiced exceedingly in new and fashionable liveries, and the anticipation of what effect the silver favours might produce in *his* favour, on the heart of no other than the fair and gentle Magdalene, for whom he entertained, though he did not dare to profess, a most "respectful" attachment.

Miss Maxwell was in the pouts; she had expected all along to be installed as the bride's travelling companion; and Mary's gentleness would have consented to this arrangement, but for the interference of "Uncle Horace."

"If Mrs. Lorton *does* not want you, Miss Maxwell," he said, "Mary I am sure does not. Young people are better by themselves: even *I* would not force myself upon them!"

Miss Maxwell thought of sundry gifts and sundry prospects, and remained silent; and an hour afterwards assured Mrs. Lorton, that as

she could not bring herself, after all, to leave her *friend* alone, she would remain with her.

Lord Norley talked politics to his nephew until he made him half mad; and then seeing that he was stringing the bow too tightly, sent Lady Ellen Revis to soften and arrange. Noble Lady Ellen! what a host of trials had not her affection and generosity brought upon herself!

* * * * * *

"But you will sit to the sculptor to-day, will you not, Madam," inquired Magdalene of her mistress, after Mortimer had departed. "You know how anxious your uncle and Mr. Mortimer are about it, and the sculptor himself so eager to have sufficient to work upon while you are out of town! indeed, he is now waiting in the small breakfast room."

"Magdalene!" said Mary, looking up rather slyly at her maiden, "I think, Magdalene, that after a little time, when I bring Philip Marsden into fashion—at least into fashion with *some*—I think, Magdalene, that Master Philip will not long want a wife."

"Probably not, Madam," replied Magdalene, turning not red, but pale. "I am sure the bust he is now doing will gain him fame, and that, you know, brings favour."

"Taking a sentence from Uncle Horace, Magdalene," replied Mary; "well, I ought to forgive you for doing what I so often do myself. When I want to appear wise—I quote Uncle Horace."

"And well you may!" exclaimed the girl, her face flushing with sudden emotion;—"well you may; he is the best, the most generous gentleman under the canopy of Heaven!"

"If Philip Marsden saw you now, he would be jealous, Magdalene," said Mary.

Again Magdalene turned pale, white as ashes. Mary instantly thought within herself, "I do not, I am sure, turn pale, when Harry's name is mentioned; why should she so change? —I will inquire."

"Magdalene, I am sure you love Philip; —nay, start not—if you do *not* love him, you are a base, bad girl. Why should you not?

It is true you are but a young waiting-maid, yet, Magdalene, I know that you have seen better days; your conversation is beyond your present sphere—your manners far above your station: and though he will be foremost in that great art, which is a shadowing forth of God's own power, still, Magdalene, a girl, good, virtuous, of noble soul, and upright purpose, my Uncle Horace says, 'is fit mate for any king!' If you love him not, you are no fit maid for me. I saw you kiss his hand but yesterday."

Mary was going on, but was prevented by Magdalene dropping on her knees.

"I cannot bear to be suspected by you!" she exclaimed, while sobbing violently. "He is my brother!" She covered her face with her hands as she spoke, and Mary raised her, much astonished at her words.

"Your brother!—*your* brother a sculptor, and *you* my servant!" said the heiress, with that involuntary respect which well-conditioned minds invariably show to those stamped

by the Almighty's nobility—genius: "Why did you not tell me this before?"

"Simply, Miss Lorton, because I *was* a servant—because I could not bear it to be known that Philip Marsden's sister was obliged to earn her bread; it was pride, but God knows, pride for his sake, not my own! Your uncle discovered my secret; may the Almighty bless him! how greatly he has served my brother!"

"My poor Magdalene!" said Mary. "And you have had enemies within these walls, who talked of you with scandal."

"I know it well," she replied; "but I could bear ten times as much as that from people I despise, rather than see *him sneered at*, for the sake of my humble industry; but you, I could not bear *you* to suspect me. You will keep my secret; nor, I am sure, deem my services of less value, because my brother is a genius. I will not live upon his earnings, *my own* will be always the sweetest, but I care not for that. Should he grow ill, or very rich, and

need me then, why then—until then—I trust, Miss Lorton, you will not require another maid."

"Magdalene," said Mary, "you must tell me more of this. You are of gentle birth; I know you are!—but I must speak to Mortimer; I do not mean to keep a single secret from my husband!—I am so glad you are the sculptor's sister! I can so much the more regard you as my friend—it is such a nice romance—and Uncle Horace thus to find it out, and keep it to himself,—I cannot treat you as a servant now!"

"Treat me as you have ever done—I ask no more," said the grateful girl; and before her gentle mistress could reply, Uncle Horace himself entered the room. Mary greeted her beloved relative more warmly than ever; but when he kissed her, she thought she felt his lip tremble on her cheek.

"One other day," he said, "and my Mary will have to ask leave who she may love. I thought, child, that if I secured your happiness, I should be content to part with you

without any reference to myself; but it is not so. I could not, I think, now manage to do without your affection—I love you better than I thought I should, *for you are unspoiled*:—a heiress in London, yet unspoiled!"

"Uncle Horace," replied Mary, "you spoil me more than anybody else; indeed you do—you and Harry."

"Oh!" exclaimed the excellent man, with a tenderness of feeling which those who had only seen him in his rougher moods, could not imagine. "May it be ever thus—may he never change towards you; if he does, I should curse ——"

"Dear, dear Uncle," interrupted Mary, "why say so hard a word? curses and Harry Mortimer are surely not meet associates; if he *did* change, it would be my own fault, surely not his."

"Ay, woman! woman! However, thank God, *now* my mind is perfectly at rest on one head. I told you, long ago, I would not come to London till marriage *threatened* you."

"Well, Sir," inquired Mary eagerly, as her uncle paused.

"Well, I fancied that such was the case, and I came—my informer *must* have been mistaken. Lovers I found, more plenty than hawthorn berries in a frosty winter—all civil too, to *your rich uncle,* Mary, while they cared but little if Horace Brown were at the devil! —but not the *one* whose courtesies I dreaded for your sake."

"My sake?" repeated Mary.

"Yes, child, your sake; although I found him out in London—found too—that—but no matter," continued the old gentleman, interrupting himself; "notwithstanding a thousand corroborating and mysterious circumstances which it appears almost absurd to think of, much less repeat. I feel myself as having been a sort of mercantile Don Quixote, in search of adventures."

"But tell me, uncle, do tell me what you mean—you speak in riddles—I do not understand you—how could I?—explain—nay, it is cruel thus to tease a woman's curiosity—pray, pray explain!"

"Not now—some other time—after this

order matrimonial is attended to. Shall you not be ashamed of Uncle Horace amongst the nobles, lords, and ladies who will attend this ceremony? making a fashion of one of the most solemn ordinances of the church! eating and drinking afterwards like fools — augh! You remember your promise: no French frippery, no silks, no gauzes of foreign manufacture. Whatever we have, Mary, was earned by British trade—that trade it is our duty to support!"

"Indeed, dear uncle, I have not an inch of foreign blonde in my *trousseau!*"

"Trous—what?—trous—devil! Can't you speak English? By Vulcan! the idea of getting fashions from people who can't speak English!—a nation whom we have beat by sea and land! If there should be a war again, I'll volunteer, just for the pleasure it would give me to shoot a Frenchman!—I told that pompous fool Lord Norley so, last night. It is a wonderful thing to me how ever he came to be Lady Ellen Revis' father!"

"Or Harry's uncle," chimed in Mary.

"No, that's not so wonderful, Mary, because Harry has been properly brought up. I do with pleasure anticipate *his* appearance in Parliament; I confess it, because he is practically informed as to the *state* of the manufacturing districts:—one ounce of *practical information* is worth a pound of oral instruction. Why, there was Lord Norley the other night, notwithstanding the *pains* I took with him, absolutely confounding the shipping of Hull with the shipping of Liverpool. What think you of that?"

"Very stupid of him," said Mary, smiling.

Uncle Horace made no reply, but paced backwards and forwards, as was his custom, when thinking or excited; at last he stopped abruptly opposite to where Mary was seated:—

"I suppose you have too much of woman's trumpery to attend to, to sit to poor Marsden to-day?" he said at last.

"No, uncle, I will give him a long sitting, for you wish it."

"Thank you, my child—thank you! and I

will give you, not as a reward, Mary—*that* I would not offer you—but I will give you this purse of gold—it contains three hundred—not your modern stamped sovereigns—things invented and marked with a sounding title to cheat those who need, and still farther enrich those who possess wealth; but guineas, girl—real sterling guineas. A maiden's dower belongs to her husband; she has no right, in the sight of either God or man, to presume thereon, any more than if she went pennyless to his bosom. *He* endows her with himself, his worldly goods; she gives *herself* and her obedience—*obedience!* the bitter word to say or swallow."

"Uncle, I do not think so," said Mary, while tears sprang into her eyes; "I cannot see the hardness of that word. To please those we love, is pleasure to ourselves. Obedience is love's duty—duty, to those who think aright, is happiness. If the sound of 'to obey' distresses woman's ear, why, let her say 'to love!' construe it thus, and all is right."

"I hope that you may read it so in twelve months hence. Suppose your husband was unreasonable?" inquired Horace.

"I would reason myself into the belief that it was I who was unreasonable, and not he."

"Suppose he would that you should stay within, while he went pleasuring?"

"Well, uncle, I would stay," replied Mary.

"And pout, and sulk, and flounce when he returned," persisted Mr. Brown.

"No; I would so study to make his welcome sweet, that he would mourn to have been so long absent."

"But, Mary, men change; suppose he forgot to love you?"

"Why then," said poor Mary, bursting at once into tears,—"why then, I should lay down my head and die; and I think it very cruel of you to suppose anything of the kind; and I do not want any money, thank you, Sir; I have enough, thank——"

Uncle Horace was grieved he had gone so far; for, to confess a truth, he had a great

antipathy to woman's tears; he always said "they made him uncomfortable;" so inflicting a slight box upon Mary's pretty ear, he asked her how she dared call him "Sir!" and how she could presume to refuse his gift! and certainly her tears ceased as he shook the gold, and they quite dried up when she saw the glittering contents of a flat red velvet case, which he extracted from a capacious pocket; and having clasped a brilliant gorget round her throat, and having decided that it became her exceedingly, Mary forgot her displeasure ere you could count twenty; and why should she not? Gentle reader, there are few men or women whose tears cannot be dried by gems or gold; besides, after another day, Mary was to be a bride!

"I must say one word about that gold," recommenced her uncle, while Mary was already thinking what she should do with it. "Let there be no pretty nor petty subterfuges with regard to money between you and your husband, no closed books, no privy purse; if a man once discovers that a woman has money,

and has concealed her wealth from him, he suspects her ever after; and where there is suspicion, there is an end to happiness! I could never be as happy with Peter Pike as I am, if I had not the most implicit confidence in his fidelity."

Mary could not avoid smiling at the sort of parallel her uncle appeared to have drawn in his own mind, associating her prospects of happiness, as Harry Mortimer's wife, with his views of happiness as Peter Pike's master. She assured him that she had no desire to form a privy purse, or any purse, and then he was not exactly pleased at that; he told her that she must keep her own accounts, and talked of the advantages that would arise to females if they understood the use of the day-book and the ledger. Had his niece been fond of the study of what is called character, she would have observed how closely the business habits of this excellent man clung to his boldest projects and kindest purposes; at the very time when he had given her fifty thousand pounds without a sigh of regret, without a feeling,

save that of the highest gratification at having it to bestow, he was hinting to her the advantages that *might* result from her placing a small portion of the comparatively small sum he had just placed at her disposal, in a Savings Bank.

* * * * * *

The room in which Philip Marsden had arranged the necessary apparatus for plaster moulding, was a small waiting-apartment, with one window opening to the Square, and at this window Uncle Horace posted himself, not fronting, but leaning against a sort of pillar that projected on either side of the framework. While his niece sat, her uncle kept up a sort of running commentary—a most singular one too—upon the various topics that struck his fancy. His ideas of art were bold and original;—he had a fine, though uncultivated perception of the palpably beautiful and the sublime, though the delicate shadings of feeling and sentiment would have been thrown away upon him altogether. The time is past, and past for ever, when a knowledge of litera-

ture, and a familiarity with trade, were deemed incompatible. In literature his taste savoured of the old school. He quoted Pope—admired Addison—swore by the Spectator—abused Lord Byron—not that he had ever read a line he wrote, but he hated him for several reasons; first of all, he considered poetry as degrading to his rank; then, his Lordship was the fashion; and, above all, he resided abroad, and died abroad; and Uncle Horace, I am sorry to say, only regretted that, like Napoleon, he did not die sooner. Uncle Horace read and admired Scott, preferring Jeannie Deans to all the heroines of romance; and Mary declared he made his eyes red for a week by weeping over the Bride of Lammermoor:—these were his lighter tastes. The afternoons of his Sabbaths were spent in the society of Bacon, Locke, Newton, and that glorious old immortal Jeremy Taylor; add to this that Uncle Horace was an excellent historian; and that Shakspeare, though he seldom quoted him, was the text book of his thoughts; and you are pretty well acquainted

with Uncle Horace's store of information; that is, gentle reader, supposing you yourself are as well read—a matter by no means to be taken for granted.

Uncle Horace was not fond of new theories; and finding that the young sculptor was a believer in phrenology, he had become very anxious to dispossess him of his belief; not by argument, but by a species, or rather a succession of sneers, at what he considered its absurdity. Marsden had all the fire and energy of genius in his temperament, and fought lustily for his favourite science; he explained over and over again to him the geography of Mary's beautiful head—expatiated upon the development of the organs of time and melody, on the combination of gaiety and benevolence, the latter preventing the former from ever becoming satirical or severe—talked of her imaginative dreaminess; and what certainly was quite true, the preponderance of jealous feeling; and Uncle Horace sneered, and would give the half-enamoured sculptor no credit for his skill, because, he said, Mary carried her

heart and its accompanying feelings upon her sleeve; "but there, Master Marsden," said Uncle Horace, pointing to a gentleman who was leaning, talking to another against the iron rails of the Square, while crowds passed around him and his companion,—"*there* is a man, whose head, if you could read, I would say you were indeed a Seer."

"Where, uncle?" inquired Mary, glad to escape from her sitting.

"There, child!"

"Ah! I know one of those two," she exclaimed, half laughing; "an old lover of mine, Count de Muskito; the other I never saw before, he is——"

"He is!" repeated the young sculptor, in so changed a tone of voice, that Horace Brown and Mary Lorton turned instantly round to look at him:—"He is —" and the words came thick and deep from between his firm set lips, while his countenance paled and quivered with deadly hatred:—"He is the greatest villain under Heaven! and by the living God I will face him!"

He sprang to the door with the impetuosity of a maniac, but the strong grasp of Uncle Horace prevented his purpose.

"Marsden, you are mad; you cannot possibly know him: why, man, he has puzzled me. When he was last in England, you were little more than born. You must, indeed you must be mistaken!"

"Let me go, Sir!" persisted the youth, struggling with greater energy and power than one could have supposed he possessed:—"Let me go, Sir!—know him!—too well I know him—I would not let him escape me for immortal fame!—I will go, Sir!—If you knew all, instead of impeding me, you would go with me. Mr. Brown, I will not be detained!" By a sudden feat of agility, rather than by an effort of bodily strength, the young sculptor eluded his friend's grasp—a few more seconds' delay occurred in his opening the door; and Uncle Horace, while ejaculating that the "foul fiend had seized him," looked out of the window, and saw, to his relief and astonishment, that both the gentlemen he had pointed out had disappeared.

"Who is it, uncle?—nay, tell me who it is?"

Before her uncle had either time to reply to, or evade her question, Magdalene entered with a message from her mother, desiring to see her immediately in her own room; "She could not wait, she said, a single moment."

When Mary entered her mother's room, she found her with pallid cheeks, to which art had lent no hue. Her eyes were red and swollen, and the veins of her temples stood painfully out on her clear white forehead; she seemed labouring under some heavy weight of misery, rather than sudden or strong excitement. There was no fire in her eye, and the muscles of her well-formed mouth appeared too rigid to express ordinary emotion.

"Mary," said she, "your mother is about to solicit your charity. Your uncle, I believe, has given you gold; will you ——"

Mrs. Lorton paused, and fixed her eyes on the beaming features of her child, who waited not for another word, but drew the purse she had received but an hour before, from her bosom.

"Take it, dearest mother," said the generous girl, presenting it to her without a mingling of any other earthly feeling, with the delight she experienced in being able to minister to her mother's necessities, be they what they might:—"Take it—I am glad my uncle was so liberal!"

Mrs. Lorton clutched the purse within her slender fingers. "Is it all here, Mary, all?—and do you give it all to me?"

"Yes, mother, all. I hope it is enough for what you require:—stay, I have still twenty guineas in my desk. Shall I fetch them too?"

"Then is there only three hundred pounds in this purse?" inquired her mother in a disappointed tone.

"That is all, mamma; and tell me how you knew I had it?"

A little colour mounted to Mrs. Lorton's cheek. "How I knew!" she replied:—"How I knew!—You do not suppose I listened at your door, Mary?—you do not think I would play the eavesdropper to my own child?' she said in an irritated tone of voice; then added, "Maxwell told me."

Mary was too much occupied with thinking of the strangeness of her mother's looks, and the greater strangeness of her wanting money at a time when she knew her father's supplies had been so liberal, to inquire how Miss Maxwell knew anything of a private conversation between her and her uncle; she had not time to consider, for her mother recalled her attention by the exclamation—

"And you have only twenty guineas more!"

"But you shall have them, dearest mother. I do not want money; and if I did, I could ask my uncle—tell him you required that—and ——"

"Girl, are you mad?" exclaimed Mrs. Lorton, violently, and violence with her was indeed of rare occurrence:—"Girl, are you mad? Tell Horace Brown that I took the money from my own child which he gave her, when she was on the eve of lawful and holy marriage!—robbed my daughter! Mary," she continued, flinging the purse from her, "Mary, I will not have your gold, I will be disgraced first!

"Mother! disgraced! you will break my heart," said the poor girl. "Mother, if the hundreds were thousands, are they not yours? All I have is yours; for I am your own—your child—your Mary!"

"My own—my own—my own," sighed the half distracted woman, with a monotonous wail, as of a bereaved dove over her rifled nest:—"My own—my own—my own!—until another day is past: but, Mary, you will never curse your mother!"

"Curse my mother!" repeated the horrified girl:—"Curse my mother!" She looked at her parent with a face so full of anguish, that it recalled Mrs. Lorton to herself.

"Forgive me, Mary—only forgive me—I shall soon be better;—nay, ask me no questions, for I will answer none—I cannot. If," she added, with a quick transition of voice and manner, "if you set a price upon your gold, you can take it back."

"I set no price upon it, mother," replied poor Mary, in a heart-broken tone; "take it, and I will bring you the remaining twenty."

She went out of the room with a heavy heart, leaving the jewel-case her uncle had given her upon her mother's dressing-table. I have said she left the room with a heavy heart; I should have added, perhaps, not for the sake of the gold, but because of the mystery and harshness of her mother's manner. When she returned, Mrs. Lorton was sitting on her cushioned dressing-chair, by the table, her cheek resting on her hand, the casket open before her on the table. Mary laid down the gold beside the purse—her mother's eyes were still fixed upon the glittering gems.

"Three hundred and twenty pounds," she said at last, slowly and emphatically. "Three hundred and twenty—and I *must* have five hundred before the sun sets."

"Can you not ask my father for the remainder," said the maiden; "every farthing of my own allowance is gone. I have paid for every thing; for Uncle Horace ——"

"Peace!" exclaimed her mother, sternly; "his name presses on me like the nightmare:

and as to your father, he is altogether ill, either from indigestion or temper."

"Mother, dearest mother," in her turn interrupted Mary, "you used not to speak of my kind father thus."

Mrs. Lorton made no reply, but counted on her fingers vaguely, though not as an arithmetician, but as a dreamer. She turned the gorget over and over: "Mary," she said, after a considerable pause, "Has Harry seen this bauble yet?"

"Not yet, mamma; I intend to surprise him."

"Have any seen it but your uncle?"

"No, mamma."

"Mary, you must say—think—invent some excuse about this to him for a week—ten days—and lend it me for that period."

Mary paused. She had anticipated so much pleasure from showing the splendid present to her lover:—it was a trial; short as was the pause, Mrs. Lorton's eye fired—Mary saw it, and did not suffer her to speak.

"Oh, yes, mamma! it will be safer with you than with me, as I am going travelling, you know."

"Yes," replied her mother, "it will be safe, doubtless; it will be pledged—pawned—the fashionable way of raising money. Do not start and stare so, Mary; you may think me cruel—you would not, if you knew but all. You need not glance, my child, towards all those gems that glitter in the sun. You think I ought *first* to use them, as they are mine own, to raise what money I require."

"God knows!" interrupted Mary, "I did not think about it. I am so bewildered, I know not what to think."

"You might have thought so, and that without a crime; but one secret I can tell you: —my emeralds—my brilliants—all my chains —they are not worth twenty pounds, Mary!— no, nor ten:—you know too what they cost. Mary, your mother and her jewels are alike FORGERIES!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

Ah ! what avail the largest gifts of Heaven,
When drooping health and spirits go amiss?
How tasteless then whatever can be given!
Health is the vital principle of bliss,
And exercise of health. In proof of this,
Behold the wretch, who slugs his life away,
Soon swallow'd in disease's sad abyss.

THOMSON.

Poor Mary thought she could have borne anything, past or to come, better than the loss of her uncle's gift. She felt it was *lost*, though she endeavoured to persuade herself it was but lent. Her mother had forbade her to tell the truth to her uncle; and, until the hour of dinner, she spent the remainder of the day in the solitude of her own room, from which even Magdalene was excluded.

She felt inexpressibly mortified at the idea that, with all her money, she could not draw a single guinea at that particular time, without subjecting herself to her uncle's scrutiny. And a thousand agonizing conjectures flitted through her brain as to the cause of her mother's pecuniary distress. She established the idea, at last, that she must gamble,—and this opinion, bad as it was, was a positive relief to her mind. That day her father had decided on giving *the* concluding dinner of the season; and ladies and gentlemen of distinguished taste—*taste,* such as Kitchener and Ude appreciated—only were invited, with the exception of Uncle Horace, who made several most injudicious observations during the repast. First of all, he said, a plaice was as good as a turbot; adding, that he hardly expected to be forgiven for such an opinion, knowing as he did that people are more angry at having their tastes called in question than their virtues. Then speaking to Lord Norley, he observed, that all sorts of modern patriotism

were absorbed by self interest, as the ocean swallows up the rivers of the earth. Major Blaney, who showed his good sense by accepting, considering all things, rather an injudicious invitation, debated for some time in his own mind whether he ought or ought not to call Uncle Horace out, as a punishment for one or two sarcasms levelled against his country. And despite his veneration for his friend, and his predisposition to intoxicating happiness, Harry Mortimer could have knocked him down most heartily for his half mirthful, half malicious, encomiums on the advantages of celibacy, and the disadvantages of married life!

The ladies had not retired many minutes, Mrs. Lorton looking so wretched and bewildered that poor Mary felt assured she should be obliged to assign a reason for it to Harry, when a considerable bustle in the dining-room attracted their attention,—servants were hurrying backwards and forwards,—and full soon the truth was known.

Mr. Brown Lorton had fallen forward on his own table in a state of suffocation: and within an hour the great dinner-giver of the past season was himself a feast for worms.

END OF VOL. I.

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